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JULY 1990

VIDEO

magazine

1st PEEK: WILD THINGS



POWER EDITING

A Hands-On Primer

HANDICAPPING THE HI-DEF HORSE RACE

We're In The Stretch

FIRST FIELD TEST: THE STEADICAM JR

HOLLYWOOD'S HIDDEN TREASURES

Why They're
Not On Tape

VIDEOTESTS

2VHS VCRs,
Big-Screen TV,
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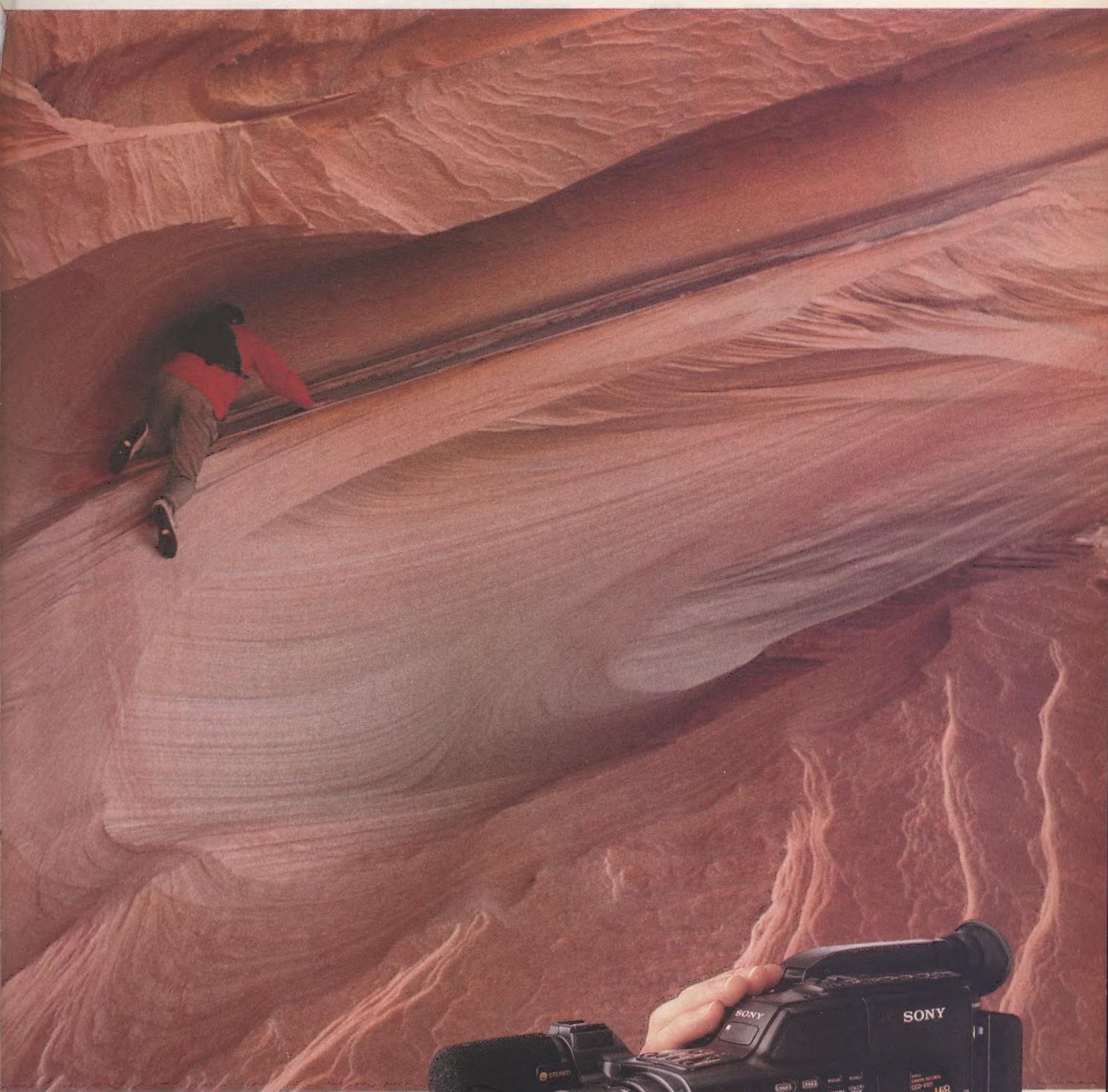
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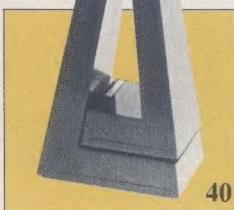
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Cover:
Editing essentials include two VCRs, a TV, a controller and plenty of raw footage.
Photograph by Jay Brenner.

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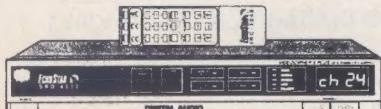


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CHANNEL ONE

Video's fuzzy new focus

Video manufacturers are making one thing perfectly clear—the major technical advance in this year's new models is "fuzzy logic," a form of computerized intelligence that reaches decisions through the same complex reasoning process used by humans. So far, fuzzy circuitry has been added to camcorders and TV sets. In the camcorder arena, Sanyo/Fisher and Canon are using the feature to humanize autofocus operations, while Sony and JVC are applying it to TV picture performance.

For obvious reasons, some manufacturers of high-tech video recording and display devices, designed to reproduce as precise and realistic video images as possible, are downplaying the term fuzzy logic in favor of "artificial intelligence."

We don't really care what it's called, as long as there isn't anything fuzzy about the results: If the new process is more hype than substance, let's move onto better things; if it's a true advance in the direction of improved and more versatile performance, huzzah and hooray.

If it does prove beneficial, we can think of several areas where video products could be improved with a dab of the human touch. Such as? Such as home editing equipment, a segment of the video arena crying out for more complex and sophisticated products and processes.

Speaking of huzzahs and hoorays, let's hear three cheers for RCA, which is entering its influential brand name in the lively laserdisc lists. RCA was burned badly back in the early days of video, when its CED videodisc format failed to gain consumer acceptance. Consequently, the firm is adopting an extremely low profile as it quietly re-enters the disc market with a laser player. But we think it's a great move. Not only will it help assure the continued growth of laserdisc, it will give RCA more credibility as a supplier of high-performance, high-end video products.

Our March cover story, "Format Face-Off," touched a nerve with our always vocal readers, and the response was a record number of letters. Some agreed with our format findings, others didn't. But we felt the outpouring of passionate opinions deserved more than the conventional letters-to-the-editor approach. The result is our first "Reader Forum," a new department which will appear whenever reader response to articles or issues justifies. Keep those cards and letters coming.

Art Levis
Editor-in-Chief

VIDEO

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National Editorial & Sales: 460 West 34
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Midwest Sales Office: Gerber/Kamikow,
60 Revere Drive, Suite 915, Northbrook, IL
60062; 708-291-8900, 708-291-8905 (fax)
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FEEDBACK

Cola crusader

In Mark Fleischmann's review of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (May '90), he did not review the Diet Coke commercial at the beginning of the tape. I too zap out all commercials in anything I watch, and especially resent them on purchased tapes, but this commercial is very clever and a great demonstration of Dolby's Pro Logic surround sound. I have used it to demonstrate my Pioneer VSA-1000 AV amplifier to friends. But I still prefer Coke Classic.

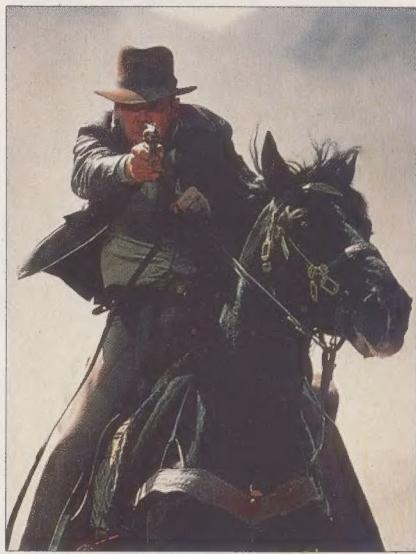
Ralph A. Brown
Bountiful, Utah

Neon monstrosity

David Lachenbruch's article on flat television ("Off the Air," April '90) was interesting, but is he aware that the Bell Labs demonstrated a flat TV display back in 1918? It consisted of an array of large, high-voltage neon tubes, and used the Nipkow scanning wheel, a distributor and thousands of tiny wires. It was a large unit — about 22 inches — compared to the two- and three-inch systems present in 1910. As a bright light flickered in a young Herbert Hoover's face, the camera fed his image into the neon monstrosity.

Carl Anderson

Lachenbruch replies: Anderson is right, but he has placed the demonstration of the first flat TV screen about nine years ahead of its actual time. Developed by Dr. Frank Gray of Bell Labs, it was about two feet square. It consisted of 100 neon lamps divided into ten vertical sections of glass tubing joined to form a continuous tube. The camera was a flying-spot scanner which cast a bright beam as it scanned objects. The first public demonstration was on April 7, 1927. A televised speech by Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, was carried by wire from Washington, D.C., to New York City. The 50-line pictures were transmitted 18 times per second. The pictures were recognizable, but HDTV it wasn't!



Just For the Sound of It: The *Indiana Jones* Diet Coke commercial merits a surround sound demo.

Tips from a teacher

"Tips From Top Pros" (May '90) is interesting, but how meaningful is a feature composed of conflicting advice from pros with seven-figure budgets to non-pros with four-figure budgets.

I've been teaching an adult education course in video production for about five years, and while my credentials are not nearly as impressive as those of your pros, I try to give sound practical advice. My advice to non-pros is: 1) develop your skills by using your equipment as often as possible. Experience is the best teacher. 2) Be sensitive to what works well or not well in your own productions as well as professional ones. 3) Shop carefully and buy the best basic equipment your budget permits. Low-priced feature-packed equipment often sacrifices quality in the finished product. 4) Read *Video Magazine* as well as publications for video professionals. 5) And last, but not least, take all conflicting advice from pros (or anyone else) with a large grain of salt.

Ralph Leinoff
Neponset, N.Y.

For the record

RCA's CC520 camcorder ("Videotests," June '90) is priced at \$1,349, not \$1,199.

Address correspondence to Feedback, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

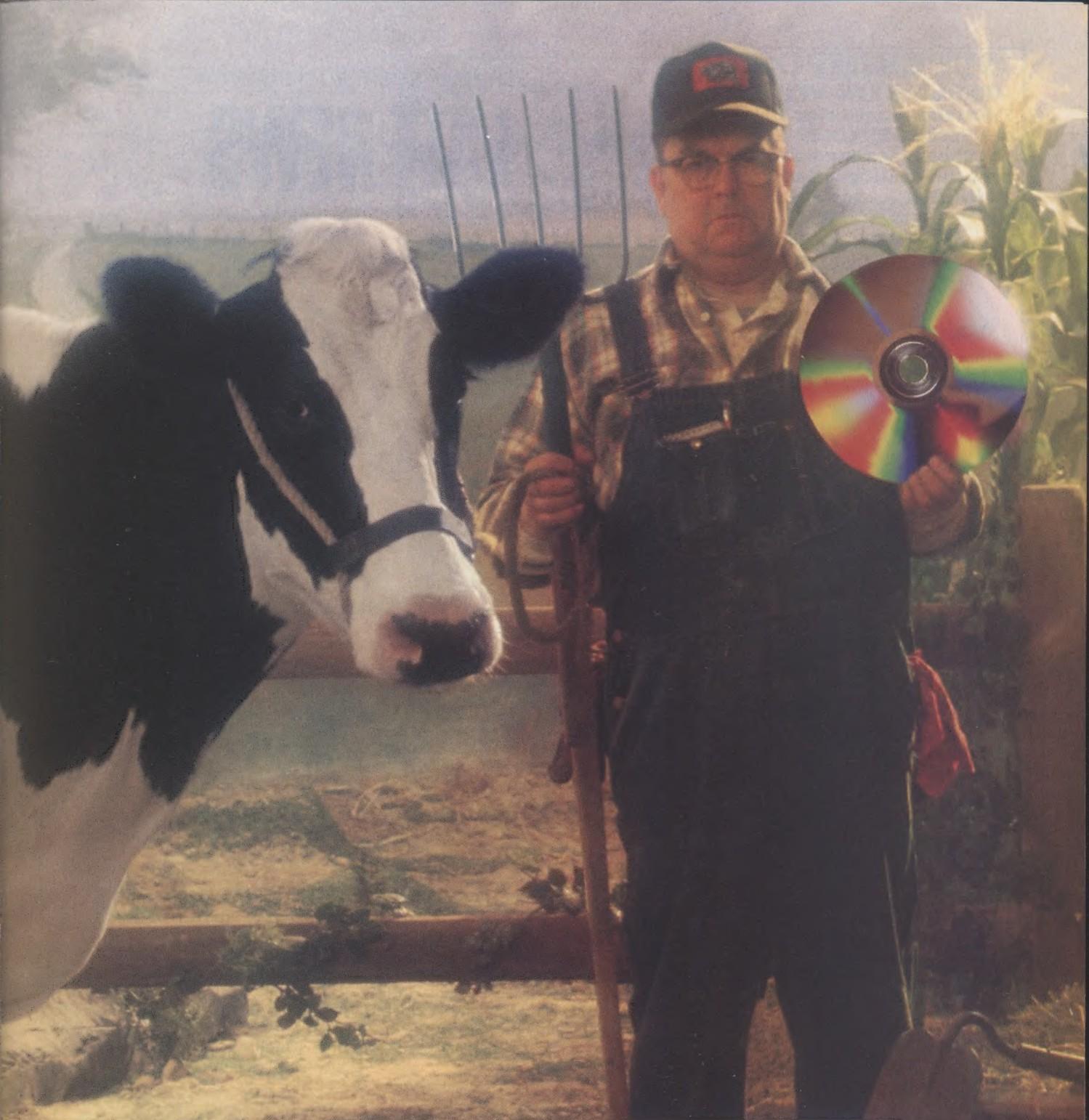
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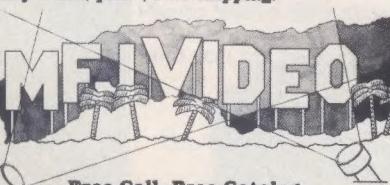
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EDITED BY BRENT BUTTERWORTH

LATE NEWS



Zenith's First 8mm: The VM8000 joins the company's line of VHS and VHS-C camcorders this fall.

Zenith joins 8mm camp with new camcorder

Prompted by the growth in 8mm camcorder sales, Zenith is adding an 8mm machine, the VM8000, to its fall line. The company will continue to sell VHS and Compact VHS camcorders. The VM8000 is a basic model, sporting such features as a flying erase head, an 8x zoom lens and 3-lux sensitivity.

With 8mm leader Sony recently edging past RCA and Panasonic to take the number-one spot in camcorder sales, video industry insiders expect Zenith to be only the first of many companies entering the 8mm market this year. Insiders are also speculating that Hitachi, RCA and GE will soon show preproduction models of new 8mm camcorders.

with diminished hearing are discriminated against because they must pay up to \$200 for stand-alone caption decoders. Addressing the House Telecommunications Subcommittee, Linda Bove of Sesame Street, who is deaf, said through a signing interpreter that hearing-impaired people pay for features they don't want, too, such as mute buttons.

Panasonic rolls out a loaded subcompact

As subcompact camcorders multiply, so do the tiny machines' features. Case in point: Panasonic's new PV-40. The palm-sized VHS-C camcorder's chic chassis conceals a digital image stabilizer, which could help eliminate the shaky images typical of ultra-mini cam-

Caption decoders may become mandatory

Bills under consideration in both houses of Congress would require closed-caption decoders on all TV sets sold in the U.S. The Electronic Industries Association opposes the measures, saying they would stick consumers with a \$20 feature most people don't want.

Several major producers and TV stars, including Richard Dysart of L.A. Law and Geoffrey Owens of The Cosby Show, take an opposing view. They say that 24 million hearing-impaired Americans and 13 million elderly Americans



Palm-Sized Powerhouse: The PV-40's unique features make it one of the most capable compacts.

corders. The features list goes on—one-shot recording (which records five-second-long still video pictures), strobe, 8x zoom, 1/4000-second shutter speed and a digital superimposer.

NEC's retreat

Citing excessive competition and a saturated market, NEC has announced that it will discontinue its U.S. TV, VCR and audio lines within the next year. The company will continue to offer its TurboGrafx videogame system and two-piece IDTV projection set, and expects to re-enter the home theater market eventually. If you already own NEC video or audio gear, don't worry—the company will continue to support its parts and service network.

Nintendo competitors step up activity

Although Nintendo has dominated the videogame market for the last few years, competing hardware and software makers have begun staking out their own territory.

NEC will go up against Nintendo's GameBoy this fall with a hand-held version of its TurboGrafx video game, which uses the same credit-card-sized cartridges as its big brother. The mini TurboGrafx will feature a backlit, 2.6-inch color LCD screen with 236-by-312-pixel resolution, along with a video input jack, making it also suitable for use as a portable video monitor. The price should be around \$200, and NEC may later market a TV tuner that will work with the hand-held machine.

Nintendo's been a hit largely because so many great games have been created for it. But fans of the TurboGrafx and Sega's Genesis may now get their fair share, too. Tengen, a leading software developer, has begun releasing its games in versions for each leading videogame system. The company's new Klax game will be the first released for four systems: Nintendo, TurboGrafx, Genesis and Atari's Lynx.

Taping time marches on

Anyone who's ever missed a thrilling conclusion because their T-120 VHS tape ran out will love BASF's new T-130 cassette. The new tape adds a half-hour of recording time at the EP speed and ten minutes in SP. The company says the longer tape will cost the same as a good T-120. BASF also has a ten-hour T-200 cassette in the works—enough to tape every episode of *Twin Peaks*. ■



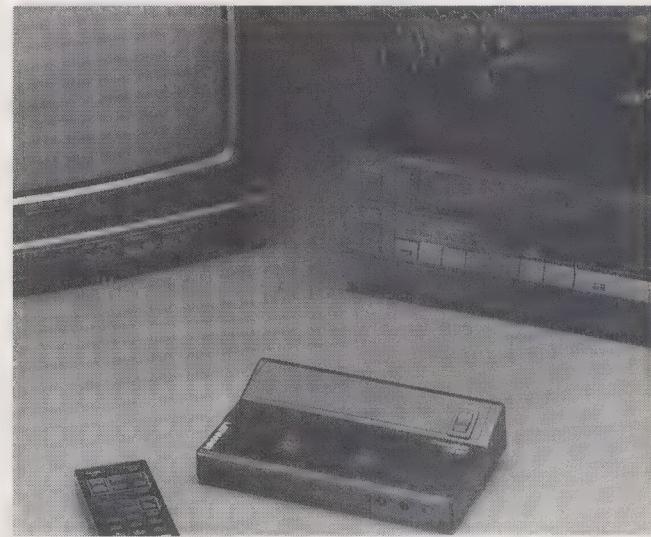
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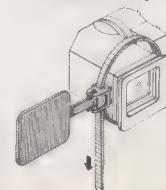
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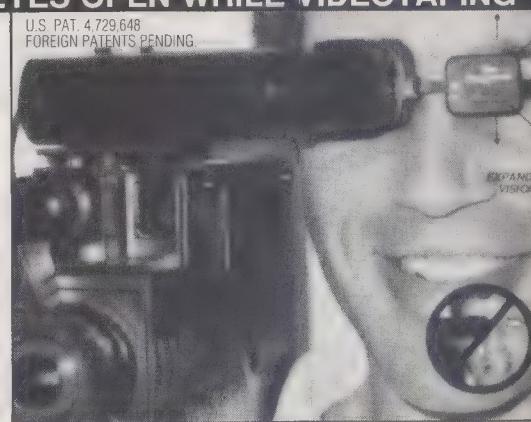
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GAZETTE

Making up is hard to do

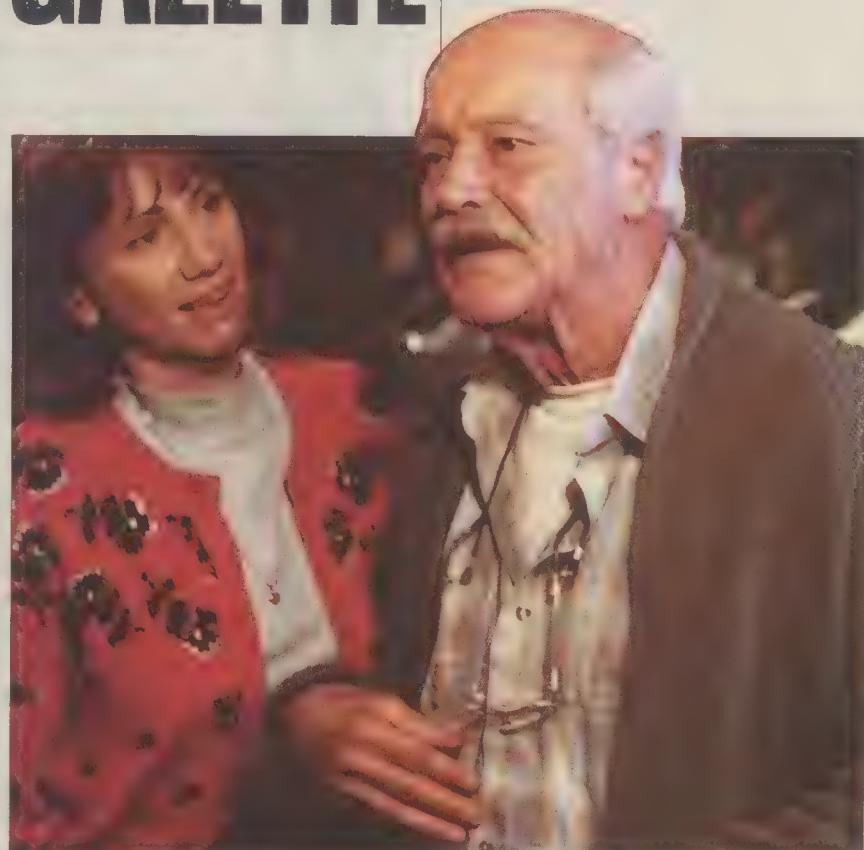
Jack Lemmon was looking for a shell to crawl inside, and when he found it, it was made of latex.

In the family drama *Dad* (MCA Home Video), Lemmon's portrayal of a frail 75-year-old was enhanced with two hours' worth of daily special-effects makeup by Dick Smith, who was nominated for an Oscar for his efforts on the film.

"You create a shell and crawl into it," says Lemmon of his acting philosophy. "Once I got the makeup on, I could crawl inside that, and I didn't have to worry about altering the voice and the walk. My voice naturally went down a little—I don't think I could re-create that now. I didn't have to work at being old, I just *was* old. If the makeup didn't work, the whole thing would not have worked."

Now 65 years young, looking tanned and fit and searching for challenges, Lemmon should have little to worry about. But his first look in the mirror with full *Dad* makeup on caused him a twinge of anxiety. "They do it in patches, and it shrinks and wrinkles. It is, to an extent, what I will look like one day. My first feeling was shock, total shock, but then I was overjoyed because I thought it was brilliant."

His father's bout with cancer brought about real-life changes similar to those which occur in *Dad*. "I was always close to him, but hadn't realized it was not as full a relationship as it could



Good Old Boy: Daughter Annie (Kathy Baker) and revitalized father Jake (Jack Lemmon) in *Dad*.

be," Lemmon says. "I was trying to measure up, to make him proud of me. Before he died, we were able to go off together to Europe for six weeks, and we talked about things we never talked about before."

Lemmon also has a son, actor Chris Lemmon, with whom he says he is "terribly close," but it has taken a *Dad*-like effort. "It's no help if your old man is a movie star. The hills are littered with the corpses of relationships that have gone sour."

—Jami Bernard

Jodi Benson makes a splash

"My friends tell me she looks just like me," says actress Jodi Benson of Ariel, the Little Mermaid in Disney's animated musical of the same name. But the resemblance is no coincidence. Benson, who provided the voice of the film's title character, was videotaped performing

Video Flashes

International Incident. Sony officials were more than a little dismayed to find that the owner's manual for the company's SLV-70 VHS VCR uses December 7—the infamous date of Japan's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor—as an example when explaining how to set the timer. After receiving a complaint from a customer, Sony issued an official apology. Says a company spokesman: "It would be irrational for anyone to think that a company that does 25 percent of its business in the U.S. would do anything like that intentionally."

Blanks for the Memories. Competition is tough among blank tape manufacturers, but American Electronics and Entertainment has found an original way to attract buyers. The company is packaging two blank



Saga For Sale: Cary Grant in the 1939 *Gunga Din*.



I Dream of Disney:
Jodi Benson (above)
both provided the voice
and inspired the look
for Ariel in *The Little
Mermaid*.

the songs, and Disney animators later drew the character while watching the tapes.

A six-year veteran of Broadway musical theater, Benson thought the tapes would be "for the archives or something, but they used them as reference tapes," she says. "Ariel's personality and looks are very close to mine—she's feisty, rebellious, cocky. My friends kept nudging me, saying 'She has your face! She has your eyes! It's amazing.' She's taken on a little bit of me, and I have to say, it's an honor."

Benson is just beginning to realize the significance of the project—when you sign on with Disney, you've signed on for life. "It's been a whirlwind, dream experience to work with this corporation," she says. "This could be a classic that's around for 50 years, and my voice will be immortalized, like Snow White or Cinderella."

The 29-year-old actress believes that women her age have a special need for fairy tales like *The Little Mermaid*. "There's too much reality in my life and on the streets of New York to just reconfirm it on the screen," she says. "Ariel is 16 in this movie, and that's such a fragile time. It's all about growing up and reaching a dream, and that's a timeless theme."

—Jami Bernard

And now a word from our sponsor

Does your prized high-end VCR represent liberation from the relentless flow of commercial messages on TV? New York-based collector Ira Gallen begs to differ. As founder and president of a production company and archive called Video Resources, he has amassed between 15,000 and 20,000 commercials, public service announcements, station break IDs and other between-the-cracks broadcast material dating from the '40s to the '70s. And he has marketed 24 spellbinding hour-long videocassettes



Fond Memories: Toy commercials are the favorite among Video Resources' vast collection of spots.

MGM/UA T-120 tapes with an additional cassette of a pre-recorded classic movie for its \$19.95 "Triple Packs." Available titles come from the Turner/RKO library and include *King Kong* (1932), *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *Gunga Din*, *Back to Bataan*, *Fort Apache*, *The Big Sky* and *Every Girl Should Be Married*.

Start Saving Your Pennies. Panasonic introduced what it calls "the world's first commercially available" rewritable laserdisc recorder at the National Association of Broadcasters' convention in April. Intended for professional video and broadcast applications, the machine has two recording modes: The "normal" mode records 60 minutes of full-motion video per disc with 400 lines of horizontal resolution, while the "high-resolu-

tion mode" delivers 40 minutes of video per disc and 450 lines of resolution. The machine, which won't be available until fall, will be priced somewhere in the \$35,000 to \$40,000 range.

Still in the Game. In response to the needs of a physically impaired 12-year-old in Oklahoma, Nintendo has developed a game controller that employs a "puff and sip" tube in place of standard controls. The Hands Free controller requires no arm or hand use and a minimal amount of head and neck dexterity, and is compatible with all NES software except the Zapper and Power Pad series. The basic unit is available directly from Nintendo for \$120, plus shipping and handling. Call 800-422-2602 for more information.

consisting of nothing but so-called interruptions.

Located on Manhattan's Upper West Side, Gallen's headquarters looks like several generations of toy and antique stores piled high on top of each other. Here he prepares programs and catalogs new acquisitions.

"I started doing this after I went to the Museum of Broadcasting to see some of the toy commercials from my childhood and discovered they didn't have them," Gallen explains. "At first I got everything on 8mm and Super-8, but as people found out what I was doing, I began to hear from retired producers and directors who were happy to let me have their work on 16mm and 35mm film."

Gallen's tapes are broken down into categories, including two collections of beer commercials, two of classic car spots and eight volumes of what he calls "kids' commercials," devoted to toys and related products. The toy spots are closest to Gallen's heart and, not surprisingly, to those of many of his customers. "I find that everybody remembers the ad for 'Mr. Machine,'" he says, "and that a lot of women in their thirties and early forties want to see the ad for 'Mystery Date' again."

Despite his vast holdings, Gallen continues to search for certain ads that have eluded him thus far. "I'm still looking for 35mm technicolor copies of the Chiquita Banana commercial," he explains. Video Resources can be reached at 220 West 71 St., New York, NY 10023. Tapes are \$24.95 each, and an illustrated catalog is \$3 postpaid.

—Bruce Eder

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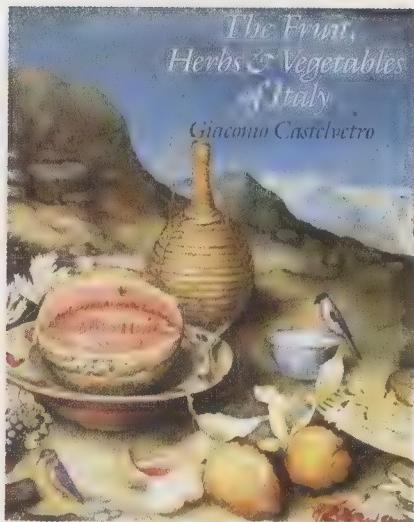
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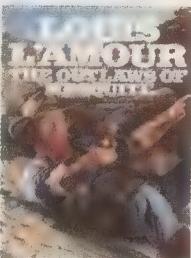
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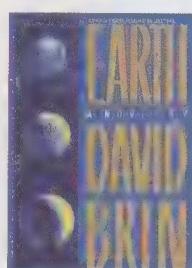
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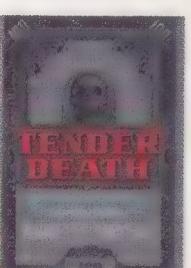
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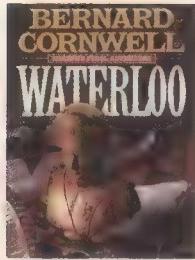


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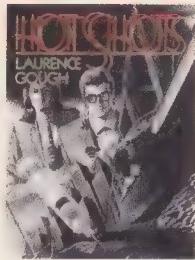


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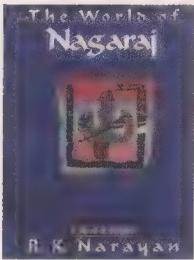
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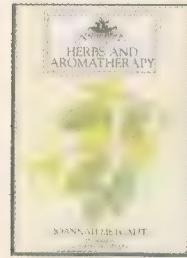
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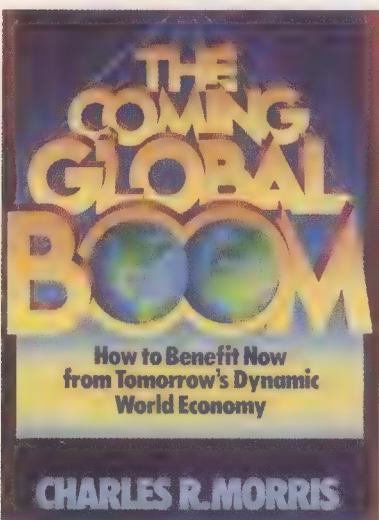
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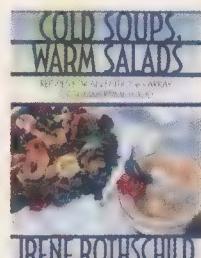
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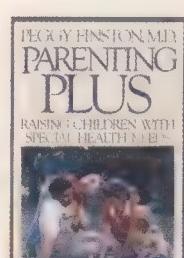
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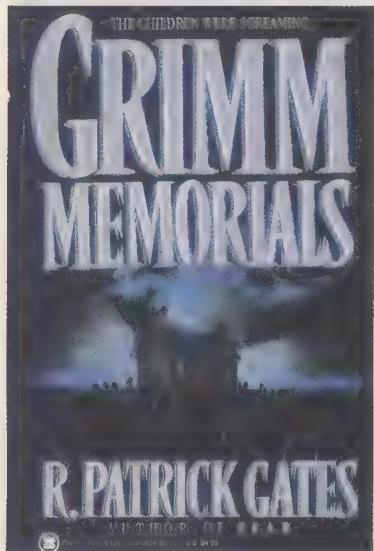
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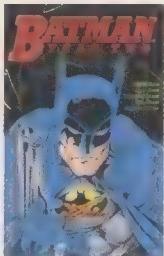
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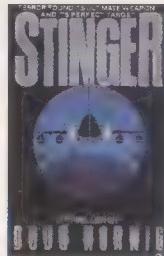
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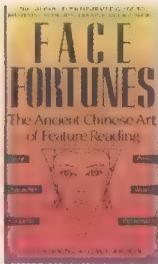
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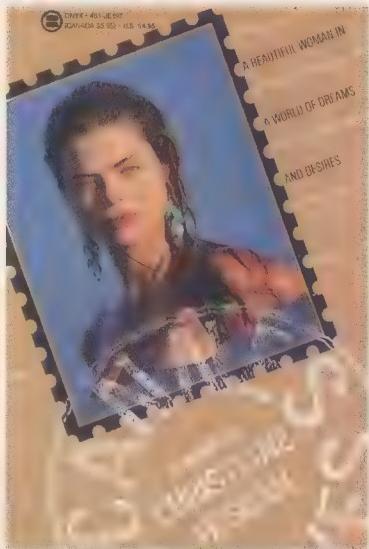
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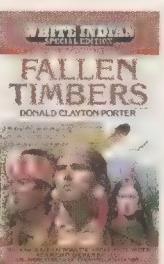
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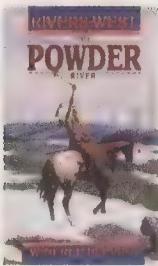
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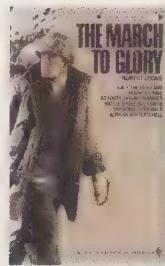
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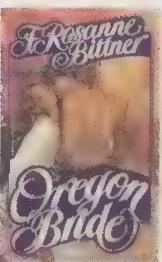
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Masterson's 'Immediate' success

Although she has appeared in such quality films as Francis Ford Coppola's *Gardens of Stone* and the underrated *At Close Range*, Mary Stuart Masterson regards her performance in Jonathan Kaplan's *Immediate Family* (RCA/Columbia Home Video) as her finest work. But roles of this caliber are very hard to come by, at least according to Masterson.

"There aren't that many parts, in general, for women," she explains. "You either have to take your clothes off or be a peripheral character—the girlfriend, the sister. And if you are the star you have to be a hero who jumps out of planes and goes into the jungle with a machine gun." As *Immediate Family*'s Lucy, a pregnant and unwed teenager who gives up her child for what she hopes will be a better life, Masterson found a role she could really sink her teeth into. "It's kind of nice to play a human being," she says wryly.

Masterson was also pleased with the way the film explores a variety of sensitive subjects. "Lucy's decision to bring the baby to term has a lot to do with current political issues—big ones like abortion, the welfare system, medicare and the lack of aid for people who don't have enough money to take care of their

children," she says. "I think all these issues are brought up in the movie, but not in a didactic way. To me that is the key, because if you're going to reach everybody, you have to just present the information and let people make of it what they will."

—Shari Roman

Lost 'Souls' rediscovered

It's not that drive-in audiences in 1962 couldn't recognize a good horror movie when they saw one. It's just that industrial filmmaker Harold "Herk" Harvey's low-budget *Carnival of Souls* fell into the hands of a distributor who absconded with all the money. The actors, who had deferred their salaries, were never paid, and the picture was left to rot in chopped-up form and relegated to random late-night TV showings.

But good horror movies have a way of finding their audience. With the help of a successful comeback last year at New York's Film Forum 2 revival house, *Carnival of Souls* became a hit on the art-house circuit and is now available on cassette from VidAmerica.

Filmed partially at an eerie, deserted carnival in Salt Lake City, *Carnival* is about a church organist (Candace Hilligoss) who begins to lose touch with reality after surviving a watery car crash. She is fascinated by the abandoned carnival, and stalked by a chalk-white ghoul (played by director Harvey).

Baby Makes Three:
Mary Stuart Masterson
portrays an unwed teen-
age mother in
Immediate Family.

"The makeup I intended to use was egg white," says Harvey, now head of the drama department at the University of Houston. "I had hoped to put on elaborate makeup that would flake so it looked like I had been in salt water. Because of time restrictions—we shot whole sections in as little as a day—I used regular greasepaint, and darkened the eyes. The best-laid plans," he sighs.

Location shooting hardly ate into the film's \$30,000 budget. "The state of Utah let us use the pavilion without charge. For the scene in the department



Monster Mash: Director Herk Harvey saved money by casting himself as a ghoul in *Carnival of Souls*.

store, the railroad station and the bus station, we simply said, 'May we shoot a film here?' And they said 'Yes.' The scene of the car going off a bridge into the water was shot in Harvey's hometown of Lawrence, Kansas. "They told me I could do that as long as I'd repair the bridge. So we tore the bridge up a bit, dropped the car off it, retrieved the car, and they handed me a bill for \$12.50—beams, labor, everything."

—Jami Bernard

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AUDIO INPUT

Adding sonic booms to itty-bitty rooms

BY IVAN BERGER

New surround sound systems can help transform the video viewing/listening experience from a humdrum living room affair into a vibrant theatrical experience. However, what if that living room is not a spacious area with a range of sonic options? What if it's not even a living room, but a cramped little New York apartment bedroom scarcely larger than the bed itself? Harsh reality intrudes, that's what, and the task of installing a decent audio/video surround system takes on new and more challenging dimensions. I know, because we're talking about my bedroom. My living room isn't yet ready for surround treatment, so when Technics sent me its SU-AV55

surround sound amp for review, I decided to take the small-room challenge.

A narrow aisle separates the bed from bookcases and night tables lining both sides of the room, and from a desk and dresser (with TV set on top) at the foot. My bedroom audio/video system is a modest one, consisting of a Pioneer LV/CD player, an NAD 27-inch TV and a pair of aging Advent mini speakers. (I'm between bedroom VCRs.) When I'm not testing an amplifier or receiver with this system, the Advent speakers are hooked directly to the TV set's amplifier outputs.

Positioning the front speakers for surround is no problem: The right one goes on top of the electronic gear (LV player, product being tested, etc.) to the right of the TV, the left one atop my

wife's desk. This arrangement places both roughly at ear level (when we're sitting up in bed) and a reasonable distance away.

The rear speakers are a/d/s L-300C mini speakers. One goes on my night table, the other on my wife's bookcase, putting them also at ear level. But the rear speakers are beside, not behind, us. That means each of us is far closer to one speaker than the other. As a result, sounds that are supposed to come from behind do not quite do so. Another obvious problem is that each of us hears the nearer surround speaker far more than the farther one. I've tried aiming the speakers straight up, to move both apparent sound sources a bit farther off, but the surround sound effect works best when the speakers face in at us, and at each other.

Clearly, my bedroom surround system isn't perfect. But, it's more adequate than the physical setup would suggest, especially when it's used to play Dolby Surround LV discs.

On those discs, sound sources that are supposed to be behind us actually seem to be somewhat off to one side. But they're still coming from well off-screen and definitely aren't coming from in front of me. Ambient sound—crowd noises, cave reverberations and the like—come through nicely, making me feel I'm in the midst of the action. Only when I'm listening critically, forcing myself not to be sucked into the onscreen action, do I become conscious that there's no sound to the rear. Even then, I feel I'm part of the crowd, albeit slightly on the periphery.

Getting the best effect takes very careful adjustment of the surround delay time. The greater the delay between front and rear speakers, the greater the surround effect. In any setup, the sound reaching your ears from the speakers is delayed by about one millisecond for each foot of distance between those speakers and your ears; since the surround speakers are closer than they are



Ivan Berger is Technical Editor of Audio Magazine.

in a theater, some additional delay must be supplied by the surround decoder. Because not all setups are the same, the decoder's delay is usually adjustable.

The Technics amp adjustments allow a range from 15 to 30 milliseconds of delay in the Dolby mode. With my bedroom setup, I had expected that the short distance between listeners and the rear speakers would call for the maximum delay. In practice, I found about 25 to 28 milliseconds best—with the full 30 milliseconds delay, the rear sounds seemed too distant from the front ones.

The balance between front and rear volume takes careful adjustment, too. Otherwise, the front channels simply swamp the rear ones or, worse still, the rear channels drown out the front. The front/rear balance setting I use varies a bit with the program material and with the listening audience (my wife likes a bit less rear volume than I do).

If it becomes necessary to set a stereo system's left/right balance control off center, it generally means something's a bit off in the system—probably a loss of gain in one channel or an off-center listening or speaker position. The front/rear relationship is a different matter, however, and it's often necessary to set the balance control off-center, due to ordinary variations in listening position, front and rear amplifier sensitivity or front and rear speaker efficiency.

Front/rear balance is easiest to set when it can be adjusted from the listening position. Fortunately, the Technics remote includes balancing controls. But I'd also like some visual indication of the front/rear balance setting, so I could restore old settings if I'd changed them.

The SU-AV55 has no center channel or subwoofer outputs, but there are ways around both problems. To achieve better bass, the amp includes a Digital Sampling Bass (DSB) system. This converts all frequencies below 160 Hertz to digital signals, drops the frequencies an octave, then converts low-bass signals back to analog and mixes them with the original signal.

If the original doesn't include much bass below 80 Hz, the DSB system will

*'Used judiciously,
a little surround
goes a long way,
even in mono.'*

add it; if your speakers attenuate low bass that is in the original signal, DSB will give those speakers a bit more bass to chew on. The DSB output can be varied, so speakers are not overloaded with frequencies they can't handle. If the original signal does include low bass and the speakers reproduce it easily, the circuit can be switched off.

"Centering" program dialog when there is no center channel can be a problem. I find it sometimes helps to turn the surround amp's front channels down and turn the TV set's speakers up, simply because the set's built-in speakers are closer to the screen than the more

widely spaced main speakers. If the TV has only one mono speaker, the centering is even more effective.

When I listen to music in surround, I set the front/rear balance far more to the front than for Dolby Surround movies. For stereo music, I use the Dolby setting, even though an A/V Stereo mode is intended for music, while the Dolby Surround mode isn't. Unfortunately (at least on the amp I used), A/V Stereo generates no right rear signals, only left rear ones.

There's also an A/V Mono position. This doesn't even come close to making the sound source sound like stereo. But used judiciously (a little surround goes a long way, here), it makes me feel as if I'm listening to a mono source in a larger, more reverberant room.

As you've probably guessed from all the surround features I've been discussing, the Technics SU-AV55 is very much a video-oriented amp. The only audio-dedicated jack sets are the tuner and CD inputs, a pair of low-level surround outputs (to drive rear speakers with an other amp) and tape inputs and outputs. Off the other connections, the TV and video disc inputs have stereo audio jacks, plus a composite video jack apiece, while the CD input and the VCR 1 and VCR 2 input/output loops feature the above, plus an S-video output. Both composite and S-video outputs (but no audio jacks) for connection to a TV monitor are also included.

Another set of VCR 2 inputs is located on the front panel. Confusingly, the switch that selects either front or rear jacks is positioned just above the VCR 1 selector button. ■

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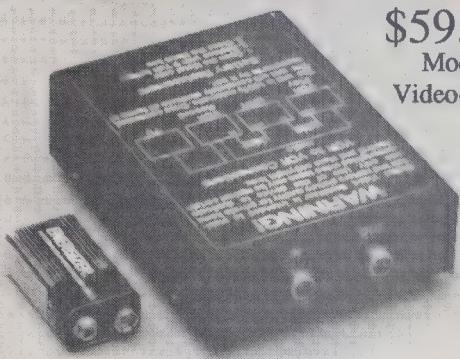
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READER FORUM

FORMAT FUROR

What's best, what's not? Our 'Eyes-On' comparison triggers a heated debate.

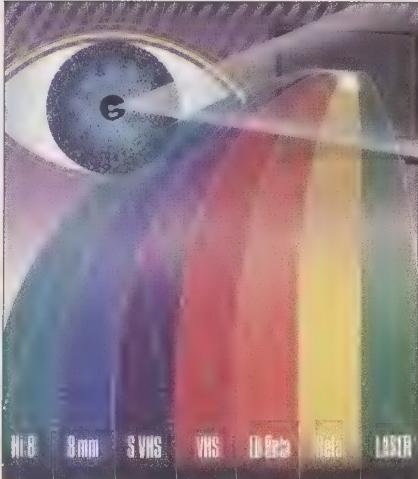
With so many formats competing for the hearts and minds of video buffs, we were sure "Format Face-Off" — the eighth in our series of "Eyes-On" evaluations — would trigger a spirited debate among readers. But we were caught off guard by the torrent of mail our March feature unleashed. Your reactions ranged from pleased to outraged, and included plenty of personal opinions about which format delivers the best picture — making it clearer than ever that feelings still run as strong as in the days when the playback lane stretched from VHS to Beta and back again.

The feature reported the subjective reactions of a panel of *Video Magazine* editors to a test program displayed in each of the major viewing formats, including laserdisc. By rating the formats

for each of several components of picture quality — resolution, color, brightness, etc. — the panelists decided that laserdiscs delivered the best picture, followed by Super VHS, 8mm, SuperBeta, ED Beta, Hi8 and VHS.

Some readers asked why we omitted Compact VHS. We did so because VHS-C tapes are too short to use at SP speed for watching movies or taping TV shows, and because their specifications are identical to those for VHS. Readers also wanted to know what tapes we used. We watched the test programs on JVC's Victor SXZ120 for S-VHS, Maxwell's RX Pro 120 for VHS, Sony's EL-500 for ED Beta, Sony's Pro X/L-500 for SuperBeta, Sony's Hi8ME for Hi8 and TDK's MP-90 for 8mm. All are at the top of their class.

In addition, several readers took us



to task for failing to hold another viewing after a dirty video head was discovered late in the test on the ED Beta deck. Here's a selection from your comments, pro and con.

I was gratified to see laserdiscs and Super VHS come out on top in "Format Face-Off" since I have invested heavily in both. However, your test for contrast seems simplistic. You said you looked for the difference between the blackest blacks and the whitest whites. But when it comes to contrast, more is not necessarily better. Ideally you want a good range of grays in between. This is why I prefer S-VHS over VHS. Its flatter, more even contrast level appears more lifelike. Of course, laserdiscs give the best of both worlds. Thanks for an interesting article.

Carl Orth
Carmel, Indiana

I find your estimation of laserdisc quality exaggerated. For six years I have been on an emotional roller coaster because of the wildly fluctuating quality control of domestic manufacturers. The reality — not the potential — of laserdiscs is that they have excessive video noise:

speckling, inclusions, crosstalk from warpage, etc. Their incidence on discs is far greater and more aggravating than any problems I have experienced with videocassettes. Even more alarming, my discs have not lasted as long as my tapes.

Bob Stephens

San Francisco, California

Congratulations on your "Eyes On" evaluation of video formats. It's very informative, and it's amazing to think no one has done it before. Keep up the good work.

David A. Bryant
Canton, Massachusetts

I am disappointed by "Format Face-Off." After testing seven home video formats and compiling the results, the staff discovered the ED Beta deck had clogged heads then chose to print the results as tested, making ED Beta appear as a substandard format. That's like racing a Ferrari with a flat tire against a Ford Taurus in tip-top condition, and rating the Ferrari second because it couldn't stay on the track. I have used ED Beta since it came on the market and find it far superior to any home video tape format; so much, in fact, that it is a viable substitute for the 3/4-inch professional format in many instances.

Richard D. Bennette
President, The Video Transfer
Ridgefield, Connecticut

I give "Format Face-Off" a score of zero, for its flawed, unfairly conducted test. Hi8 and ED Beta are designed to serve mainly as camera acquisition systems, and to re-record their own high-resolution material using metal tape. When recording from a lower resolution oxide tape source, such as the one-inch studio format you used, the results will be predictably bad.

The ED Beta deck was found to

have dirty heads after the test, yet you didn't repeat the trials, and your monitor does not have resolution capabilities equal to ED Beta. I have cameras and decks for all the formats you tested. When I operate them properly, using the best available tape (Canon Metal Evaporated for Hi8 and Ampex BetaCam SP for ED Beta), I show results that are dazzling and virtually noise-free.

Steve McDonald
Eugene, Oregon

I have been a Beta fan for years and I cannot agree with your ratings. I have compared ED Beta to S-VHS, U-Matic and SuperBeta—and ED Beta excels in all your rating categories, particularly in regard to S-VHS. I have never seen SuperBeta display better quality than ED Beta. I agree that laserdiscs are probably superior, but my experience is that disc quality is inconsistent.

Dr. Joseph M. Edelman
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

I was surprised to see how poorly ED Beta fared compared to other formats. The article states that the ED Beta machine had a clogged video head. This would explain the problems, but using an incapacitated machine in such a comparison is like road-testing several cars then mentioning that one of the cars was tested with a flat tire.

Brenda D. Walden
Video Horizons Productions
Yucaipa, California

It's amazing that even with a clogged head, ED Beta placed first among VCRs on resolution, and beat VHS on color intensity, color constancy, color shift and color accuracy. I had ignored ED Beta as just another gimmick format like S-VHS and Compact VHS, but there is no telling what this format is capable of doing.

William T. Clark
Columbus, Ohio

I'm a cameraman who works on feature films and recently I've been trying out 8mm and Hi8 camcorders with an eye toward buying one. Although the 8mm picture is pleasing, there's no way I would pick it over the crisper Hi8 picture. If you honestly feel the "details appeared fuzzy" in describing Hi8, you must have done something wrong. This is exactly where Hi8 shines, and if Hi8's success is retarded by your results, you are doing us a disservice. Wouldn't you be thrilled to have a Hi8 version of Sony's CCD-TR5 camcorder?

Mako Koiwai
Topanga, California ▶

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READER FORUM

Based on my experience with five of the seven formats, I would rank Hi8 first, followed very closely by S-VHS, Super-Beta and 8mm, and more distantly by VHS. (I have never used ED Beta, and laserdiscs look impressive from what I've seen.) But since not all decks within a format are as good as the best deck, the only solid conclusions I can draw from the shootout is that all other formats are a big improvement over VHS, and laserdiscs are an improvement over tape.

Duane Howts
Lexington, Kentucky

Your article was most interesting, and disturbing in the questions it raised. For example, I wonder to what extent the differences in picture quality, particularly among the tape formats that ranked close to one another, might stem from normal variations in the quality of the tape decks that were employed. Might the results have been different if a second set of VCRs of the same models had been used instead?

Philip M. Alden, Jr.
Larchmont, New York

I was stunned to see ED Beta score abysmally against S-VHS and the laserdisc. Not until near the end, does the article say that the ED Beta deck had a clogged head and that the deck performed better after cleaning. Yet, rather than repeat the tests with a properly prepared ED Beta deck, you published the skewed results, leaving the impression that the ED Beta format is not worth considering.

Dennis R. Norwood
San Francisco, California

TECH TIPS

Speedy titles

You can add sharp titles to videos even if you don't have a character generator. The method I use is to shoot typewritten phrases with the camcorder's macro function. The results are clear and professional-looking.

Scott Cherek
Milwaukee, Wis.

Bag your remote

To keep remote controls looking and working like new, simply enclose them in clear Ziploc-type plastic bags. Fold and tape any excess bag underneath the unit. This works with infrared and RF remotes, but not with ultrasonic types.

Dan Turner
Petaluma, Calif.

EDITED BY BRIAN CLARK

NEW PRODUCTS



Canon debuts ultra-light 8mm camcorder

Canon's 8mm Canovision 8 EO6 camcorder weighs just 2 pounds (without battery), yet it's packed with a number of sophisticated features. Canon's intelligent auto-exposure system combines two-field metering with backlight detection to retain image detail. A new 25-zone auto white balance is designed to reproduce more lifelike colors. Aided by a half-inch, 270,000-pixel CCD image sensor, through-the-lens autofocusing ranges from 0.6 inches at the wide-angle setting to 13 inches at the telephoto setting. The EO6 uses an f/1.8 lens that has a 6x zoom with a range of 9 to 54 mm.

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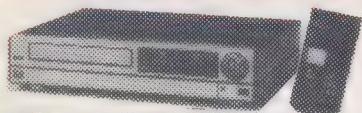
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NEW PRODUCTS



Pioneer introduces heavyweight disc player

Pioneer's Elite LD-S2 laserdisc player is a top-of-the-line deck that uses a fully digital processing system that includes digital time-base correction, Y/C separation with video noise reduction and a color noise suppressor.

Special effects are aided by an eight-bit digital field memory, and include multi-speed play with strobe picture and still picture with sound. Some of the LD-S2's 68 pounds come from a doubly shielded structure designed to eliminate noise.

The unit produces a video signal-to-noise ratio of 52 decibels and uses a 20-bit 8x oversampling digital filter. Two independent R-core transformers supply power to separate audio and video circuits. The unit will be available in August.

Price: \$3,500.

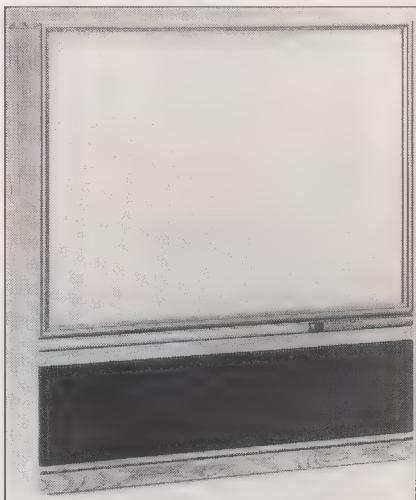
For additional information, circle No. 152 on Reader Service Card.

First 61-inch TV from Magnavox

Magnavox's RL8570OAK rear-screen projection television is the company's first 61-inch set. It has a 50-watt Dolby Pro-Logic surround system by JBL and a color picture-in-picture feature. The audio system includes two 6-inch and two 2-inch speakers, along with surround sound connectors. There are also two S-video inputs and stereo/video inputs and outputs. A personal preference feature permits picture and volume controls to be preset. The set's 160-degree, wide-angle screen has an improved picture thanks to circuits that extend the chroma performance of greens by filtering out excess red light.

Price: \$3,395.

For additional information, circle No. 153 on Reader Service Card.



Watchman doubles as portable monitor



Sony's newest Watchman TV set, the FD-250, has a 2.7-inch black & white picture tube. When used with a camcorder, the FD-250's A/V input jack makes it practical to use as a field monitor. Connected to a VCR, it can be used to watch tapes. The unit weighs 17 ounces without batteries. It measures a pocket-sized 4-1/4 by 7-3/8 by 2-1/8 inches, and comes with a shoulder strap. A retractable antenna (not pictured) rests on top of the unit.

Price: \$169.99.

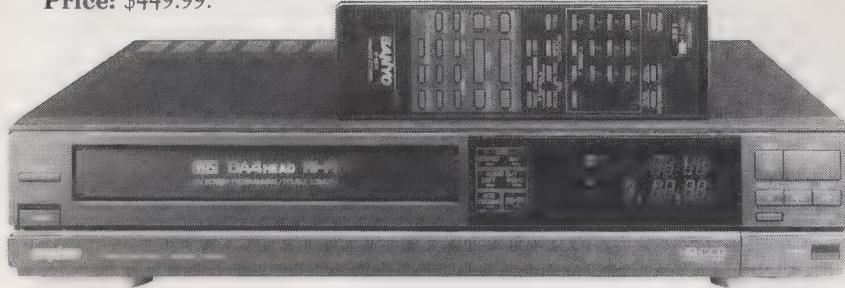
For additional information, circle No. 154 on Reader Service Card.

Sanyo VCR packs heavy feature lineup

Sanyo's VHR9670 VHS VCR packs a variety of features not usually offered together in mid-priced decks. The features include four video heads, hi-fi sound, a 181-channel cable-compatible tuner, a real-time tape counter, an Index Search system to speed access to desired points on a tape, and a "go-to" function. This allows a user to choose an exact point to begin playing or recording by designating the spot in hours, minutes and seconds of elapsed tape time. An Index Scan feature fast-forwards or rewinds to the beginning of each recording, plays the tape back for five seconds and continues scanning until play is chosen.

The 9670 also has onscreen programming, a one-year/six-event timer, auto channel programming and auto tracking. When the unit is in play and no signal is on the tape, a blue screen appears. A high-speed cue-and-review feature runs at 5x in SP and 15x in EP. Quick playback permits fast review with a noise-free picture. Four heads produce a clear frame in the pause/still, frame advance and variable slow motion modes. A 35-key infrared remote is included.

Price: \$449.99.



For additional information, circle No. 155 on Reader Service Card.

Yamaha speaker designed for center channel

The Yamaha NS-C70 loudspeaker is intended for use as a center channel in home theater systems. It is magnetically shielded so it can be placed near TV sets with no loss of picture quality. With a frequency range of 70 to 20,000 Hertz, the speaker can also be used in pairs. The front panel is set at a 15-degree angle, permitting a variety of mounting options. Two four-inch drivers are housed in a cabinet that measures 17-1/2 by 5-3/8 by 6-1/4 inches. The speaker weighs eight pounds.

Price: \$119.

For additional information, circle No. 156 on Reader Service Card.

Camcorder has a head for dates

Nikon's VN-850 8mm camcorder has a feature that allows it to memorize two "birthdays" and one event date. The birthdate (or any other date that's important) setting shows the current age in years and months. The event date setting shows the elapsed time since an event was last recorded. An infrared remote control permits the videographer to be part of a production. When the camcorder is used for playback through a monitor or a VCR, the remote can reset the tape counter, start playback, rewind, fast forward, reverse/forward frame, pause, slow motion and record.

The camcorder's f/1.6 lens has an 8x power zoom, and a CCD image sensor with 270,000 pixels. Subjects can be recorded in light as low as two lux. A flying erase head facilitates editing, as does edit search and high-speed scene-search functions. With the auto-lock cover closed, everything is automatic. An open cover reveals manual controls for focus, white balance, backlight and six shutter speeds.

Price: \$1,400.

For additional information, circle No. 157 on Reader Service Card.



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For additional information, circle No. 14 on Reader Service Card.

VIDEOTESTS



VIDEOTEST NUMBER 544

Sony VHS hi-fi VCR

Sony's recently released SLV-575UC is particularly noteworthy because it is the least expensive VHS hi-fi VCR to offer a shuttle dial and a host of automatic operating sequences. Yet it is very easy to use and exhibits exceedingly good audio and video performance in its class.

The shuttle dial makes it very easy to get to a particular spot on a tape.

Turn the dial clockwise and the tape moves forward; counterclockwise, and it moves in reverse, with the speed controlled by how far off center the user turns the dial. The speed choices are 1/5x, normal, 2x and cue/review; the center position provides a still picture. The automatic sequences include rewind/timer record, play/rewind/stop/off and go to zero/play. To top it all off, the machine is very handsome, with all of its controls except the shuttle dial hidden in a front compartment.

The deck includes many useful fea-

tures, such as hi-fi stereo sound, auto tracking with manual override, auto repeat play and a recallable data screen with counter, tape remaining, tuner/source, function, speed and date/time information. The timer is very flexible, with one-shot, daily, weekly, Monday-to-Friday and Monday-to-Saturday options. Two nice extras are high-speed rewind and—in a first for consumer VCRs—self-cleaning tape heads.

A second set of line input jacks in the front compartment makes it easy to copy tapes from a camcorder. A dedi-

Sony SLV-575UC VHS VCR



VIDEOTEST PHOTO: CHING

DATA

Suggested Price:
\$599

Weight:
14.3 pounds

Dimensions:
3-7/8 x 17 x 14-1/2
inches (h/w/d)

Power Requirements:
120 VAC, 60 Hz

Power Consumption:
32 W

Tape Format: VHS

Tape Speeds:
record—SP, EP; play—
SP, LP, EP

Video Heads: 4

Slow Motion:
bidirectional—1/5x on
VCR shuttle control;
variable—1/5x-1/30x on
remote

Speed Play:

bidirectional—2x

Rapid Search:
SP—7x, EP—21x, lock-
ing type using
dedicated buttons on
remote

Cue & Review
(Search):
SP—7x, EP—21x, non-
locking using fast for-
ward and rewind
buttons on machine or
remote, or using shuttle
dial

Swing Shuttle Dial
Speeds:
bidirectional—1/5x, 1x,
2x, cue/review

Fast Forward/Rewind
Time:
3-3/4 min. for T-120;
1-3/4 min. for T-120 in
high speed rewind
mode

Remote Pause:

Control S input

Remote:
IR wireless with
switches for TV or VTR
commands and VTR
1/2/3 command modes;
buttons for power, TV/
VTR, volume up and
down, channel up and
down, audio monitor,
index, index mark, in-
dex erase, input select,
record mode, data
screen, counter reset,
10-digit keypad, enter,
timer clear, timer re-
cord, menu; up, down
left and right cursors;
execute, function mem-
ory, pause/still, record
(2 buttons), slow minus,
slow plus, direction
rocker, x2, play, high
speed rewind, reverse
search, rewind/review,
fast forward/cue, for-
ward search and stop

Counter Digits:
5—hrs:mins:secs.

Program Start
Locator/Index/Cue:
index scan and search;
auto/manual index
write, manual erase

Auto Functions:
rewind, repeat, play/re-
wind/off, go to zero/
stop, go to zero/play,
go to record start/play,
record/power off, re-
wind/eject/power off,
rewind/play,

Linear Audio:
mono

Hi-Fi AFM Audio:
stereo

Tuning Method:
frequency synthesis

Channel Selectors:
programmable scan on
VCR; scan plus direct
access on remote

Preset Method:
automatic plus add/
erase from scan se-
quence

Broadcast Tuning
Range:
2 to 13, 14 to 69

Cable Tuning Range:
A-8, 2 to 13, A to W,
W+1 to W+58, A-5 to
A-1, W+59 to W+84

AFT:
switchable with manual
fine-tuning

Timer:
8-program/1-month and
quick timer (OTR)

Special Features:
self-cleaning heads, still
frame, bidirectional
frame advance, sepa-
rate eject, counter
memory (through
menu), channel lock,
auto channel change



Reel Fast:
Sony's SLV-575UC
VHS VCR rewinds a
T-120 tape in less than
two minutes.

cated rear-panel recording output dispenses with the onscreen displays; only the monitor output provides onscreen menus. If you've been spoiled by a top-notch VCR with all the bells and whistles, Sony's new mid-priced machine shouldn't disappoint you.

Description. The SLV-575UC is black and displays no front-panel controls except the shuttle knob. To the knob's left is a large display area. Further left sits a compartment, the door of which swings down to reveal a headphone jack and buttons for power and eject on the back wall along with the

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Absent Features:
audio dub, video dub,
insert edit, visible fast
forward and rewind

Accessories:
remote control with bat-
teries, stereo audio/
video cable, 75-ohm
antenna cable, antenna
transformer

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution:
240 lines

Video S/N, Unweighted:
SP—45.7 dB;
EP—41.9 dB

Video S/N, Weighted:
SP—51.7 dB;
EP—50.3 dB

Chroma AM S/N:
SP—48.0 dB;
EP—39.4 dB

Chroma PM S/N:

SP—40.8 dB;
EP—36.2 dB

Audio Frequency Response:

hi-fi—20 Hz-20 kHz,
+0.1/-2.3 dB; linear (-3
dB)—100 Hz-10 kHz,
SP: 100-4 kHz, EP

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range:
88.9 dB

Linear Audio S/N:
46.8 dB

Audio Distortion:
hi-fi—0.3%, linear—1.1%

RATINGS

Picture Quality:
very good/excellent

Audio Quality:
very good/excellent

Operational Ease:
very good/excellent

Overall Performance:
very good/excellent

VIDEOTEST NUMBER 545

Canon A1 Mark II Hi8 camcorder

Like its predecessor the A1, Canon's A1 Mark II may be held like a traditional camcorder, or like a 35mm still camera for better stability. Duplicate run/stop and zoom controls make operation equally easy in either style. The Mark II's improvements include an image sensor with more pixels for greater detail, and a new type of tracking autofocus that follows the main subject even if it moves off center. The auto iris tracks along with the AF for taping subjects against lighter backgrounds.

Other improvements include a jack for external stereo microphones (but not stereo audio line in); a telemacro focus range for shooting from as close as two feet; S-video input so it can be used as either the recorder or the player in editing; and two additional action-freezing shutter speeds, 1/4000 and 1/10000-second. Carried over from the earlier model are the convenient control layout and the LCD readout on the top panel, the IR remote control, and the 24-hour delayed start timer which, among camcorders, may still be unique to the A1 and the A1 Mark II.

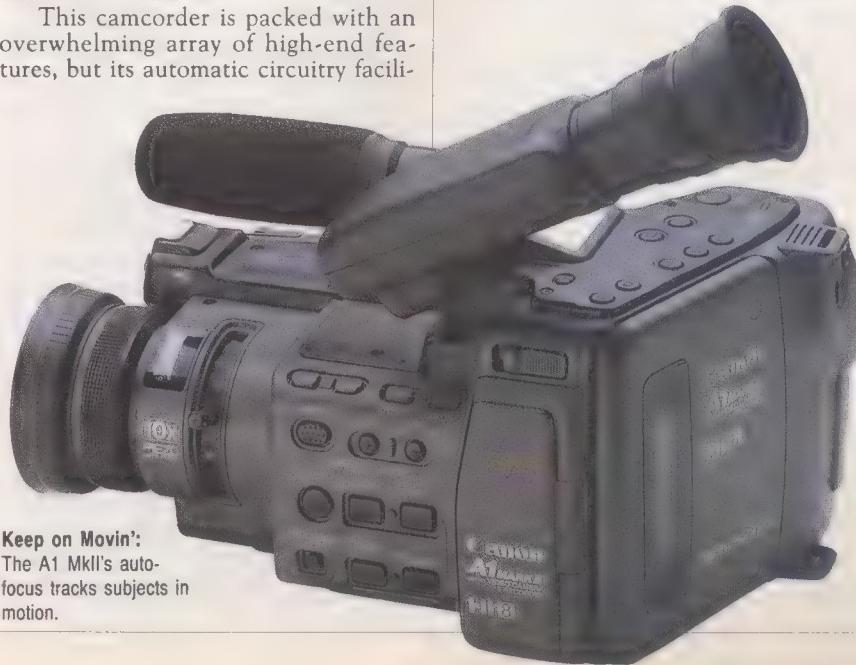
This camcorder is packed with an overwhelming array of high-end features, but its automatic circuitry facil-

tates point-and-shoot operation. These special features include auto/manual exposure (iris) with onscreen meter in manual mode, two-zone auto/manual focus with one-shot capability, a two-line/16-character titler, a self-timer, an interval timer, record (edit) search, insert editing and Y/C output. We found only a few omissions: inputs for stereo line audio and fixed positions for indoor and outdoor white balance. Otherwise, we're content with the feature package.

Description. From the side grip forward, the A1 is more like conventional camcorders. The grip has a red run/pause button, a wide-angle/tele button and a battery eject slider. As on many current camcorders, the battery is an exposed part of the grip. A compartment for the clock battery hides under the main battery. Just above the support strap's rear attachment point sit mini jacks for a stereo microphone and DC out to power the mic.

The front of the left side has the manual focus ring and the zoom lever. A knob on the lever pulls out to release the macro lock. The camera control panel holds buttons on the top edge for forward and reverse search in record mode, and title and date imprinters. Underneath these are controls for fade, manual exposure, auto/manual/locked

continued on page 31



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SONY VHS VCR

continued from page 29

cassette hatch. Below the hatch are jacks for video and stereo audio line input 2, a switch for command mode 1/2/3, and rotary controls for left and right hi-fi record level, phones level and sharpness.

The sturdy horizontal surface created by the open door holds buttons for high-speed rewind, stop, pause/still, record, rewind/search, play, fast forward/search, edit, timer record, quick timer, up and down normal/slow tracking, auto/manual tracking, TV/VTR, input select, SP/EP, and channel up and down.

The rear panel has a large ventilated bulge, the power cord, input and output connectors for VHF/UHF/cable, and a channel 3/4 RF output selector. To the right of these is a control S input jack, followed by three columns of video and stereo audio jacks for line input 1, line out and monitor out. The line out video jack carries a signal without onscreen displays, for using the SLV-575UC as a playback deck when editing or dubbing.

The remote control is medium-sized, with a switch to determine whether it will command a Sony TV or VCR and a second switch for VTR 1/VTR 2/VTR 3 command modes. These modes com-

mand Sony Beta, 8mm and VHS VCRs, respectively. However, the SLV-575UC can be set to respond to any of these command modes.

The remote has buttons for power, input select, record mode, data screen, counter reset, volume up and down, channel up and down, audio monitor, index, index mark, index erase, timer clear, timer record, a ten-digit keypad and enter.

Further back are tape transport controls, with buttons on a silver background for play, high-speed rewind, reverse search, rewind, fast forward, forward search and stop.

Operation. Setting up the SLV-575UC is easy. Simply connect the power, antenna and TV RF cables. Use the monitor output jacks if you want to see the onscreen displays. Using the VCR is equally easy, but the compartment must be opened to load a tape or perform any functions at the machine. The basic transport controls are similar to those on audio cassette decks.

The other controls are well-labeled and easy to use. The quick timer button activates the recorder for half-hour increments up to eight hours. The shuttle dial operates in playback or record modes to find a precise spot on the tape at any of four speeds in either direction. It is very useful for accurate editing.

The remote control provides all these options except headphone volume, sharpness, manual record level control, edit switching and tracking adjustment. Instead of a shuttle dial there is a direction rocker, and buttons for 2x and slow motion with stepped options for speeds from 1/5x to 1/30x. Cue and review search is accomplished with the fast forward and rewind buttons, while dedicated buttons lock the search in either direction. A ten-digit keypad provides direct access tuning and clock/timer adjustments.

A user can access some remote control functions only through menus, using buttons for menu, execute, function memory and four-direction cursor controls. The main menu offers a list of submenus: auto menu, auto repeat, timer set/check, mode set, tuner preset, function memory, clock set and demonstration. Using these options is simply a matter of selecting one and pressing execute, or following onscreen instructions.

A few, like timer and clock, require responses on the keypad. The dedicated function memory button executes one selected sequence like play/rewind/power off or rewind/eject/power off without having to go through the menu. Ease of operation is very good to excellent.

Performance. The SLV-575UC delivers a horizontal resolution of 240-plus lines with an unweighted video signal-to-noise ratio of 45.7 decibels at SP and 41.9 dB at EP. It plays but does not record at the LP speed. The weighted video S/N is 51.7 dB at SP and 50.3 dB at EP. The chroma AM S/N is 48.9 dB at SP and 39.4 dB at EP, and chroma PM S/N is 40.8 dB at SP and 36.2 dB at EP. All the SP measurements except chroma PM S/N are outstanding. At EP they are average, except for weighted video S/N, which is very good. Picture quality is very good/excellent.

Hi-fi audio frequency response is 20 Hertz to 20 kilohertz, +0.1/-2.3 dB, with a dynamic range of 88.9 dB and total harmonic distortion of 0.3 percent. Frequency response on the mono linear track is 100 Hertz to 10 kHz at SP and 100 Hz to 4 kHz at EP, with an S/N of 46.8 dB and a total harmonic distortion of 1.1 percent. Audio quality is very good/excellent.

Conclusion. The Sony SLV-575UC rates very good to excellent overall with similar ratings on audio, video and ease of operation. Its long list of features is a big plus, especially the automatic functions and the shuttle dial. The suggested price of \$599 makes it the least expensive VCR to have many of these features, so it is an exceedingly good value. We recommend it highly. ■

**Canon A1
Mark II
Hi8 Camcorder**

DATA

Suggested Price:
\$2,299

Weight:
3.3 pounds, without
battery and cassette

Dimensions:
5-7/8 x 6-1/4 x 10-1/8
inches (h/w/d)

Power Requirements:
6 VDC

Power Consumption:
9.5 W

Image Sensor:
1/2-inch CCD,

410,000 pixels

Lens:
f/1.4, 10x (8-80mm)
power zoom with tele-
macro and wide-angle
macro ranges

Filter Diameter:
55mm

**Minimum Focusing
Distance:** 2 feet

Autofocus:
auto tracking/fixed TTL
with manual mode

Minimum Illumination:
rated—7 lux;
measured—10.3 lux for
50 IRE units

Iris:
auto with auto tracking
BLC, AE lock and manual
modes

Auto Fade:
hold-down type, to
white in 4 seconds

Shutter Speeds:
1/10000, 1/4000,
1/2000, 1/1000, 1/500,
1/250, normal (1/60)

Interval Timer:
1/2 second every 10,
20 or 60 seconds

Self-Timer:
10-second countdown
to 30-second burst or
continuous shooting

White Balance:
auto with lock

Viewfinder:
0.7-inch CRT with
sports finder and indicators
for counter, tape end, no cassette, low
battery, dew, date battery,
interval timer, self-timer, eject, record
pause, record, play, stop, fast forward
rewind, still, Hi8, exposure meter, white
balance, shutter speed, line in, menu, title,
date, time, program timer and fixed/tracking
autofocus zones

Viewfinder Controls:
diopter focus

Microphone:
stereo electret
condenser

Jacks:
external mic, DC out,
headphones, video and
mono audio in/out, stereo
audio out, S-video
in/out, remote out

Tape Formats:
Hi8, 8mm

Tape Speed: SP

Video Heads: 2

**Cue & Review
(Search):**
9x forward, 7x reverse

**Fast Forward/Rewind
Time:**
approx. 6 min. for 120-
min. cassette

Remote:
IR wireless with buttons
for start/stop, zoom
rocker, date, title, counter
reset, tape return, display, rewind
(search), play, fast forward
(search), stop, record, frame advance
and pause/still

Counter Digits:
5-hrs:mins:secs.

Counter Memory:
return to zero

Hi-Fi (AFM) Audio:
stereo—camera recording
and play only, mono—line recording

Special Features:
flying erase head, still
frame, frame advance,

1/5x slow motion, visible fast forward and
rewind, remote pause, separate eject, auto re-
wind, 24-hour timer

Absent Features:
speed play, program
start locator/index/cue,
audio dub, video dub,
linear audio

Accessories:
remote control with batteries, 70-min. battery,
lithium clock battery, compact power adapter,
charge coupler, RF unit, shoulder strap, A/V cable,
S-video cable, stereo cable and E6-20HME Hi8 cassette

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution:
Hi8—400 lines;
8mm—250 lines

**Luminance S/N,
Unweighted:**
Hi8 S-terminal—42.5
dB

**Luminance S/N,
Weighted:**
Hi8 S-terminal—47.5
dB

**Video S/N,
Unweighted:**
43.8 dB

Video S/N, Weighted:
51.5 dB

Chroma AM S/N:
S-video—46.2 dB;
video—47.7 dB

Chroma PM S/N:
S-video—38.4;
video—38.5

**Audio Frequency
Response:**
20 Hz-10 kHz, +0.2/-3
dB, down 10.8 dB at
20 kHz

Dynamic Range:
71.7 dB

Audio Distortion:
0.3%

RATINGS

Picture Quality:
very good/excellent

Audio Quality:
very good

Operational Ease:
excellent

Overall Performance:
very good/excellent

CANON CAMCORDER

continued from page 29

exposure, auto/auto tracking/manual focus, AF macro/one-shot AF, shutter speed, white balance and auto/manual operation.

Canon focused its ergonomic design on the A1's rear. The recorder is angled so that it's almost perpendicular to the camera. The cassette hatch (with viewing window) is at the rear, left of center. The right part of the recorder projects sideways to form a grip, as on a 35mm still camera.

At the back of this grip are a second set of wide-angle and tele buttons positioned under the user's thumb. A second run/pause button sits on top, under the index finger. The power slider occupies the space between the front and rear grips, and can be reached from either grip. The headphone jack sits above this switch.

Part of the rear grip swings aside to reveal buttons for line/S-video in/out, Hi8, title/date adjust, timer, plus, minus and shift. One touch of the timer button followed by plus or minus gives a choice of ten- or 30-second self-timer, or two-second recordings every ten, 20 or 60 seconds. Two touches of the timer button followed by plus or minus sets the

continued on page 88

CAN TV & VIDEO IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S GRADES?

Apparently so, as a number of researchers using 'closed captioned' television report.

You may never have seen captions, but they are hidden in more than 190 hours of TV programs every week and in over 2000 of the most popular home Video movies. When captions are decoded the dialogue appears on the screen (much like subtitles) so the viewer can read the script as it is spoken.

Closed captioned TV & Videos are being used by a number of progressive schools and Universities. Instructors now recommend that students should watch all TV & Video programs at home 'with captions' because "...consistent reading of television will exhilarate their reading abilities, result in greater retention and improve comprehension..."

So if you want to give your child a head start at school, here is how you can turn those passive TV hours into active learning sessions:

A new VCR with the unique capacity to decode and display closed captions, formerly exclusively available to schools, can be bought now for use at home. This is good, old home education with a Television Age Twist. Call the exclusive manufacturers of Educational VCRs:

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VIDEOTESTS



VIDEOTEST NUMBER 546

Magnavox VHS VCR

The VR9970 is the first Magnavox to have a jog/shuttle dial. It is a stylish, petite machine with a long list of features, including four video heads, stereo hi-fi audio, a flying erase head for clean transitions, many non-digital playback effects, synchro edit, audio dubbing and video dubbing. A real-time counter plus index and time search systems make getting to specific locations on the tape

easy. The deck has all common automatic functions plus repeat, which replays video segments that have no blank spots.

The new deck uses a frequency synthesis MTS tuner capable of SAP recording—an unusual feature for a VCR. SAP is recorded on both hi-fi and linear tracks. Channel search is another uncommon VR9970 feature. It cycles through the preset channels, pausing briefly on each until the user selects one. Other noteworthy features include double-speed play, half-speed play, and an eject button and seven programmable buttons on the remote.

Description. The black VR9970 is just 14-1/4 inches wide and looks disarmingly simple with a display area at the far right above buttons for power, stop/eject and VCR, and indicators for stereo and SAP. A dark green door covers the cassette hatch and the infrared sensor. The door allows IR signals from the remote to pass through.

Filling the recess below are a headphone jack, rotary controls for the head phone and manual hi-fi record levels, an auto/manual hi-fi switch, and buttons for input, audio and video dub, record, rewind/search, fast forward/search,

continued on page 92

Magnavox VR9970 VHS VCR

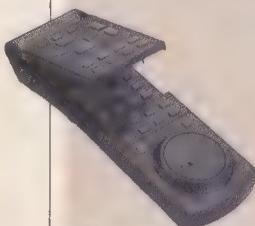
DATA

Suggested Price:
\$850

Weight:
9-1/2 pounds

Dimensions:
3-3/8 x 14-1/4 x 11-5/8
inches (h/w/d)

Power Requirements:
120 VAC, 60 Hz



Power Consumption:
23 W

Tape Format: VHS

Tape Speeds:
SP, LP, SLP

Video Heads: 4

Slow Motion:
1/2x, and 1/5x to 1/30x
variable from remote
only

Cue & Review (Search):
SP—7x; SLP—21x

Fast Forward/Rewind
Time:
2-1/2 min. for T-120

Remote Pause:
use synchro edit

Remote:
IR wireless with jog/
shuttle dial; slide switch
for learn/use; indicators
for jog/shuttle, channel,
learn and error; exposed
buttons for VCR
power, eject, VCR/TV,
OSD, monitor, channel

search, play, rewind/
search, fast forward/
search, stop, channel
up and down, pause/
still, frame advance/in-
stant search, slow, slow
speed up, and down,
2x, record, 1/2x, jog/
shuttle, channel and
seven programmable

functions; hidden but-
tons for clock/counter,
memory, clear/reset,
program, duplicate
channel up and down,
10-digit keypad, index,
add/delete, standby
OTR, OTR, time
search, repeat, tracking/
V-lock up and down,
speed and input

Counter Digits:
5—hrs:mins:secs.

**Program Start Loca-
tor/Index/Cue:**
index with auto, and
time search

Auto Operations:
rewind, repeat, tracking,

on/play (no tab), play/
rewind/eject (no tab),
rewind/stop, off at end
of rewind and eject with
power off

Linear Audio: mono

Hi-Fi AFM Audio: stereo

Tuning Method:
frequency synthesis

Channel Selectors:
programmable up/down
scan on VCR; scan
plus direct access on
remote

Preset Method:
auto program plus add
and erase

Broadcast Tuning
Range: 2 to 13, 14 to 69

Cable Tuning Range:
2 to 13, A to W, AA to
BBB, A-5 to A-1, 5A
and 65 to 94

Timer: 8-event/1-month

Special Features:
flying erase head, still

Chroma PM S/N:
SP—39.2 dB; LP—34.0
dB; SLP—36.4 dB

Audio Frequency
Response:
hi-fi—20 Hz-20 kHz,
+0.1/-2.8 dB; linear (-3
dB)—75 Hz-10 kHz,
SP: 75 Hz-5 kHz, LP:
75 Hz-4 kHz, EP

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range:
82.3 dB

Linear Audio S/N:
37.5 dB

Audio Distortion:
hi-fi—0.4%;
linear—1.6%

RATINGS

Picture Quality:
good/very good

Audio Quality:
very good

Operational Ease:
good/very good

Overall Performance:
good/very good

VIDEOTESTS

VIDEOTEST NUMBER 547

Sony 53-inch monitor/receiver

The largest of Sony's rear-projection monitor/receivers, the 53-inch KPR-53EX20, incorporates the Sound Retrieval System (SRS) from Hughes Aircraft Company. The set excels in both picture and sound. Sony's projection system uses liquid-cooled, optically coupled tubes, a mixture of glass and aspheric acrylic lenses, a multilayer lens coating and a single first-surface mirror to produce very bright, evenly illuminated pictures.

Shading compensation circuitry automatically corrects for slight color and brightness differences between the three picture tubes. New phosphors maintain whiteness and brightness over time, and high-voltage regulation prevents changes in picture size and focus as brightness changes.

On the sound side, the SRS re-creates the ambience and spatial cues lost in normal stereo reproduction. Human ears respond to sound differently than microphones. The SRS selectively boosts and attenuates frequency and phase information in recordings to compensate for these differences. The system re-creates the original environment, like surround sound, but without rear speakers. New with this set is a version

Hughes' Next:

Sony's KPR-53EX20 features updates to the Hughes Sound Retrieval System: separate modes for stereo SRS, mono SRS and normal stereo.



of SRS for mono sources, and an SRS off position for conventional reproduction.

Other features include three video/stereo audio inputs (one with S-video capability), a monitor output with a fixed audio level, a variable-level audio output (with SRS) for feeding a hi-fi system, and two RF inputs, with a loop-through output for feeding a cable de-

coder. Among the more conventional features are a sleep timer, a turn-on timer, 12-hour channel block, onscreen displays and remote adjustment of sound and picture.

Description. The KPR-53EX20 squeezes a 53-inch picture into a relatively small cabinet that's just 3-1/8 inches wider than the picture. The cabi-

Sony KPR-53EX20 Projection TV

DATA

Suggested Price:
\$3,299

Weight: 298 pounds

Dimensions:
54 x 46-1/4 x 34-3/4
inches (h/w/d)

Power Consumption:
230 W

Screen Size: 53 inches

Speaker Size:
two-way coaxial with
one 8-inch woofer and

3-inch tweeter for each
channel

Type of Tuning:
frequency synthesis

Method of Tuning:
programmable scan on
set, scan plus direct
access on the remote

Preset method:
auto program plus add
and erase

Broadcast Tuning
Range: 2 to 13, 14 to 69

Cable Tuning Range:
125 channels—A-8, 2
to 13, A to W, W+1 to
W+58, A-5 to A-1,
W+59 to W+84

Remote Control:
IR wireless with buttons

for power, auto program,
add, erase, muting, an-
tenna/aux, sleep, TV,
video 1, video 2, video

3, 10-digit keypad, enter,
display, SRS, MTS, pic-
ture plus and minus,
volume plus and minus,
channel plus and minus,
clear, timer/clock, off/re-
peat, AM/PM, video,
audio, minus/left, plus/
right, and preset; also
controls for Sony VCRs
and laserdisc players:
VTR 1/VTR 2/VTR

3/VDP source switch,
buttons for power, TV/
VTR, channel plus and
minus, rewind, play, fast
forward, stop, pause, re-
cord and record safety

RF Inputs:
2, with loop-through
output for cable con-
verters

**Video/Stereo
Audio Inputs:**
3, input 2 in front com-
partment

**Internal Audio
Amplifier Power:**
stereo, 22 watts per
channel

Special Features:
S-video input, video/
stereo audio output,
auxiliary stereo audio
output, SRS, single mir-
ror, new blue and green
phosphors

Absent Features:
video/stereo audio tuner

output, headphone jack,
external speaker con-
nectors

Accessories:
supplied—remote con-
trol with batteries and
antenna adapter; op-
tional—VHF/UHF splitter,
A/V and Y/C cables

RESULTS

Horiz. Resolution:
700 lines

**Snowiness; Lumi-
nance S/N:** 55.4 dB

Chroma AMS/N: 62.7 dB

Chroma PM S/N: 62.4 dB

Accuracy of Colors:
very good/excellent

Audio Frequency

Response:
line out—20 Hz-20 kHz
+0.5/-2.8 dB; speakers—
70 Hz-20 kHz, -6 dB

Audio S/N:
line out—78.8 dB;
speakers—66.2 dB

**Total Harmonic
Distortion:**
line out—0.8%;
speakers—4.2%

RATINGS

Picture Quality:
excellent

Audio Quality:
excellent

Operational Ease:
excellent

Overall Performance:
excellent

net is shipped with the mirror reversed so the set can fit through standard doorways. The bezel is matte black. Centered below the screen is a covered compartment with input jacks for video and stereo audio, slide switches for speakers on/off, auto stereo, cable and test/normal; rotary controls for horizontally and vertically centering red and blue images; and buttons for volume plus and minus, channel plus and minus, and TV/video. A power button and LED indicators for stereo broadcast and timer activated occupy a raised area that projects through the compartment door.

The area below the compartment is bare but for a ventilation grille. At each side, a grille covers an eight-inch woofer and a concentric three-inch tweeter. It all stands on a short-wheeled pedestal finished in high-impact, simulated black wood vinyl like the remainder of the cabinet.

The reversible mirror fills the top back part of the cabinet. Below the mirror sits a panel with three F-connectors for VHF/UHF (cable) in, loop-through output to a cable converter and auxiliary in. A separate recessed panel holds line level inputs for video and stereo audio inputs 1 and 3, an S-video input that

has priority over video input 1, a video and stereo audio monitor output suitable for feeding a VCR or a second monitor, and a variable-level stereo audio output suitable for feeding a hi-fi system.

The remote control operates the TV and any Sony VCR or laserdisc player selected by a source switch near the front. The next two rows comprise buttons for operating these devices: power, TV/VCR, channel plus and minus, rewind (search), play, fast forward (search), stop, pause and record.

The third row has recessed buttons for auto program, add and erase. The lower buttons are power, muting, antenna/auxiliary sleep, TV, video 1, video 2, video 3, a ten-digit keypad, enter, displays, SRS, MTS, video (menu) audio (menu) minus/left, plus/right, reset, and plus/minus button pairs for picture, volume and channel. There's also a group of buttons for the timers: clear, timer/block, off/repeat and AM/PM.

Operation. The one assembly task, reversing the mirror, is simple; only a Phillips screwdriver is needed. Handles on both sides of the mirror make it easy to manipulate without getting fingerprints on the delicate surface. After the mirror is in place, setup consists of mak-

ing input, output and power connections; selecting cable/normal, auto stereo and speakers on/off; and adjusting convergence of the red, green and blue images using the horizontal and vertical centering controls. A built-in crosshatch generator allows easy registration and checking.

All other setup operations can be accomplished from the remote control, including autoprogramming the scan sequence, and setting the time, the timer and channel block. The rest of the operations are common to most remote-controlled TVs except that direct access tuning selections require pressing enter to activate the channel change. The only refinement we might suggest is a slightly brighter stereo beacon on the front panel. Ease of operation is excellent.

Performance. The KPR-53EX20 delivers its rated 370 footlamberts, making it easy to view even in a brightly lit room. Its high-voltage regulation lets it go from bright scenes to dark ones without changing size. The screen has an unusually large vertical viewing angle of 45 degrees so the picture remains bright whether you're sitting or standing.

continued on page 90

THE VE-100. AN EDITOR SO ACCURATE, IT EVEN IMRESSED THE EDITORS.

- 200 cuts/100 scenes
- Accurate to within 3 frames
- Audio mixing including fade in/out
- Compatible with all systems

AZDEN

147 New Hyde Park Road, Franklin Square, NY 11014
(516) 223-7044
Distributed in Canada by J.P. Morris & Associates

CAMCORDER, April 1990. "If you do a lot of editing, this product gives you the advantage the pros have: easy editing decisions and completely mechanical assembling of your master tape. It's actually fun to sit back and watch it do it's thing."

VIDEO, February 1990. "Conclusion. The VE-100 is more accurate than other VITC Editors we've tested. With this unit it's easier to mark edit-in and out points. Audio and Video quality are excellent."

VIDEOMAKER, March/April 1990. "The VE-100 is incredibly accurate. Using it is relatively painless and the unit will work with almost any VCR-Camcorder combination."



The VE-100 is a pure editor, allowing you to make extremely accurate edits. Unlike many other editors, the VE-100 is compatible with virtually all VCR's having infrared remote. Easy to follow instructions have you editing within an hour or two. After hook-up, the VE-100 learns the infrared code, and then the pre-roll of your recording deck. You then make a working copy, and you're ready for "one-button editing". Change your mind

about the edit-in or edit-out point of a scene? No problem, just go back to that point and make the change. Rewind the tape, and preview your edits before final assembly (you can watch in "fast forward" to save time). Now you're ready to make the Final Mastered Tape, and during this step you can fade the audio, or add audio from an external source. Within a short time you'll be showing off those professionally edited tapes!

Q & A

BY RODERICK WOODCOCK

Mud on the tracks

Q I have about 100 Beta tapes that have grown a fungus. Friends have advised me to copy the tapes right away, but I can't. The tapes won't play even for a second without clogging the heads on my VCR. Head cleaners are of no use. Is there any way I can clean the mildew off the tapes? They're of great value to me; some are irreplaceable.

R. O'Leary
Honolulu, Hawaii

A There is a way to clean your tapes, but it's time consuming and may prove futile. Moreover, even if you clean the tapes enough to get watchable images, you may be putting your VCR's heads at risk from imperfect cleaning. However, if your tapes are valuable, it may be worth a try. First, buy an inexpensive Beta rewinder, one that can also fast forward tapes. Take it apart so you can touch your tape as it moves through the mechanism. You should be able to adjust it so that the tape runs past a couple of external rollers. Next, replace the DC power supply, which usually uses 12 volts in inexpensive rewinders, with a nine-volt adapter. (Radio Shack sells one with a variable polarity feature.) The lower voltage will slow the tape down.

Buy a large chamois from an auto supply store and cut it into little squares you can use once then discard. Gently apply these pads to both sides of the tape as it runs through the rewinder. For a cleaner, try isopropyl alcohol. Don't use water. You'll need to do some experimenting to learn how to handle the tape, and you may need to try other cleaning agents. Finally, don't forget to take the cassette shells apart and clean any fungus on the reels. If you get your tapes in playable shape, immediately dub them onto new cassettes.

Video Magazine welcomes your questions. Please include a phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address queries to Q & A, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

Slow speed penalty

Q I have a lot of VHS tapes made at the EP speed, and during playback I find that the tracking control requires constant adjustment. Some of my tapes won't track at all without traces of noise appearing in the picture. Would one of the newer VCRs equipped with digital auto tracking solve this problem?

Philip Cavallo
Chicago, Ill.

A This is a bigger problem with slow speed recordings because the tracks are one-half or one-third as wide as those on tapes made at the standard speed. Rotating the tracking knob, or pushing the plus or minus buttons, compensates for tracking misalignments by

imperceptibly speeding up or slowing down the VCR's capstan speed to synchronize the forward tape motion with the rotation of the video heads. Automatic tracking controls use circuits to measure the signal levels coming from the tape and adjust accordingly.

But even automatic tracking VCRs can't correct for tapes made on older, misaligned VCRs, or for tapes stretched or shrunken because of bad storage conditions. The real solution would be a VCR with "dynamic tracking" video heads that move up and down to reflect the changing angle of video tracks under a variety of conditions. This feature appeared on Philips' discontinued Video 2000 VCR, which was sold in Europe, and on Panasonic's costly NV-8950 industrial VHS deck, introduced in 1983. No similar VHS deck has appeared. ■

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BY LAWRENCE B. JOHNSON

HOME EDITING VIDEO'S FINAL FRONTIER

Decks, dubs, cuts and effects: turning jumbled scenes into entertaining tapes.

Turning balloons and chocolate cake into a keepsake birthday video requires more than a hot hand with a camcorder. It calls for creative editing, or "post-production" in professional parlance. What follows is a basic guide to getting it all together: the gear you need to transform raw footage into a polished production, the basic methods you'll use to edit and tips for avoiding the common pitfalls of do-it-yourself videography.

Whether you're cutting out a few bad shots or producing Emmy-winning shows, the basic components you'll edit with are two VCRs: one for playback, the other for recording. Your camcorder can work as the playback deck, but this has drawbacks. It does produce a reliable picture free of tracking errors, because it's the same device that recorded the original tape. But when it comes to coordinating the starting and stopping of the playback and recording machines, most camcorders can prove a bit unwieldy.

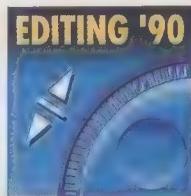
Let's assume, therefore, that you'll do your editing on two VCRs. Linking them together offers many options and many ways to do things wrong. So let's get it right...

The best way to patch most VCRs together is to use the audio and video connectors on the back of each deck. Run cables from the outputs of the playback deck into the inputs of the recorder. Using F-connectors—the quick and dirty method—degrades the picture quality significantly. If your VCRs have S-video jacks, you can use an S-cable for the video line.

Lots of decks now have such editing features as built-in controllers, audio and video dubbing or insert, synchro edit, automatic insert, character generators and special effects. They're all useful, but the only one that's an absolute must is a flying erase head for the recorder. This head rides along with the video heads on the rotating head drum. Its "flying" position lets the head erase all of a video scene from a tape. Without this feature, you'll get a rainbow or moire pattern when you insert a new scene into existing footage, because a conventional erase head leaves a little piece of the old scene in or misreads the two scenes' control tracks.

The technical challenge of video editing begins when you try to start and stop the two VCRs at the same time. Some transports get the tape rolling faster than others; if the recorder starts before the player is rolling, the result is a glitch at the edit point.

If you don't have a matched pair of the handful of decks that can synchronize these actions, there are three ways to solve the problem. The least accurate is to practice with your decks until you get used to their pre-roll times (the time it takes to get the tape up to speed). Another is to use decks made by the same manufacturer. A third is to use an outboard editing controller such as Azden's VE-100, which memorizes



HOME EDITING

the recorder's pre-roll time and compensates for differences.

ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

This brings us to the yin and yang of editing techniques: assemble versus insert. Assemble editing is the straightforward stringing together of scenes, one after another, until the sequence adds up to a finished video. The trick here is to make sure edit "splices" are clean.

Here's the basic technique. Cue the tape in the recorder to the last good frame. If your deck has a jog/shuttle dial or frame advance, cue the tape to one frame past the actual connecting point, then back up to overlap a single frame. Keep the deck in record pause while you're doing this; hitting stop will almost surely result in a glitch. Locate the next scene on the playback deck, then put the playback deck in pause. Now hit both pause buttons, starting the playback deck just slightly ahead of the recorder.

Decks with synchro edit can streamline this cumbersome process. Basically, synchro edit capability allows the playback deck to start the recorder automatically when you release the player's pause button. Because there's no common standard for synchro edit, you must use decks from the same manufacturer to take advantage of it. In some cases, you can match VCRs from manufacturers that use the same suppliers for their decks' components. For example, the synchro edit on Panasonic VCRs works with many Magnavox and Philips VCRs that have synchro edit—all are made by Matsushita. But beware—you can only be sure that two decks' synchro edit functions will work together if the manufacturers specifically say so.

An edit controller, whether an outboard unit or one built into the VCR, can make assemble editing easier and more accurate. Most of the outboard consumer editing controllers available today memorize the infrared commands emitted by each VCR's remote control, then use those commands to start and stop the decks. With built-in controllers, the VCR with the controller functions as the playback deck; another VCR (which must be of the same brand, and equipped with a synchro edit feature) functions as the recorder. The controller

starts and stops the recording deck automatically. Edit controllers can even be found in some new camcorders, such as RCA's CC520 and Minolta's Master Series V-20, each of which can memorize edits for up to six scenes.

With an editing controller, you mark the in (or starting) and out (or ending) points of scenes in the sequence you want them to appear, using buttons on the device. Many controllers let you reorganize the scenes after the edit points are memorized. Once your edit is programmed, you can usually preview it before making the final tape. When you're ready to make the edit, hit the button for "assemble" (or a similar command).

Tools Of The Trade



Planning Power:
The Video Production Kit leads home producers through the planning process.

The two decks will begin producing your video automatically. It may take a while, but it's a lot easier than riding herd on two decks.

INTERESTING INSERTS

Insert editing, as the phrase suggests, involves placing new material into a previously edited tape. Using this technique, you can break up long, wide-shot scenes with titles, stills or close-ups. It's indispensable for spicing up dull home videos. And the only piece of special equipment you need for basic insert editing is a recording VCR with a flying erase head.

Since you can't see what you're re-

As your editing skills grow, so should your editing studio. But this doesn't mean your bank balance has to shrink proportionately. Once you assemble a basic editing suite, many of the extras are surprisingly inexpensive. Most of the items listed below cost less than \$100, but all can help you create more watchable videos. Some simply make editing a little easier. Others may prove as indispensable as your favorite VCR.

Videophiles who keep their edits simple will probably be interested in Sima's new mini-editor/enhancers. The Ed/it 1 fades scenes in or out in three seconds, switches between two sources, and includes a variable-level video enhancer and bypass switch. The Ed/it 2 adds an audio mixer and microphone. The Ed/it 1 lists for \$129.95, the Ed/it 2 for \$179.95. Both can be found (probably for considerably lower street prices) at video and camera stores.

Great home videos usually start with detailed planning. The problem is, how can inexperienced videographers know what to plan for? Star-Maker Video Productions (phone 708-310-9545) has the answer: a video production kit comprising 14 laminated cards and a dry-marker pen. The reusable, 9-by-14-inch cards include scene planners, storyboards, an equipment checklist, footage logs, edit decision lists, graphic edit summaries and two slates—enough planning power for most amateurs and many professionals. The complete set costs \$49.95. Other kits and separate cards are also available.

Because storyboards require a producer to visualize and think through each scene, they can be the most important element in planning a video. But when you're anxious to start shooting, filling in all those squares can become tedious and messy. To ease the pain of planning, Lake Compuframes (phone 914-941-1998) created tractor-feed storyboard paper that fits standard computer printers. By setting up a word processor to create columns that fit the forms, a home producer can print out scripted storyboards quickly and

The key to good assemble edits is to make sure the 'splices' are clean.

cording over, you must find the spot on the edited tape where you want the inserted scene to end, then reset the recorder's counter to zero. Now rewind the edited tape past the point where you want the insert to begin, then advance the tape to the actual starting point and press pause or record/pause. On the playback deck, cue up the scene to be inserted and put the machine in pause. Release the pause on both decks, again starting the playback deck just slightly ahead of the recorder. When the counter on the recorder reaches zero, hit the recorder's pause button.

If your recording deck has an automatic insert function, you can achieve

cleaner insert edits. Automatic inserting requires the same steps as above, except that when you reset the recorder's counter, you also hit a button to enter that point into the deck's memory. Recording will automatically stop when the counter reaches zero.

Instead of simply sticking in new scenes, you may want to replace only the audio or video portion of a scene. In this case, you have two options: dub in the new material during editing, or use the audio and video dubbing function if your recording deck has them. No matter how you perform the dub, the key to getting the audio and video to work together is continuity. In most cases,

sound should fit the scene and break neatly with it.

To make an audio dub while editing, connect a different audio source—a microphone or a CD player, for example—to your recorder's audio inputs. Zero the recorder's counter where the end of the dub will be, as with insert editing. If you're adding music, you'll need to start the music at the same time as you release the pause on the VCRs; unless you're using synchro edit, this means you'll need a helper. If you're adding narration, monitor the scene being recorded to get your visual cues. You can blend the original audio with music and

continued on page 112



Editor's Little Helper: Sima's Ed/it 2 switches and fades video and audio.

neatly. The paper comes in four styles, 500 sheets for \$42.

Pro cinematographers start their scenes with a slate—the familiar black chalkboard with a striped clapper on top. Slating cuts confusion at the editing table because it labels each tape segment with scene numbers, take numbers and other pertinent information. With slates to refer to, the editor has less chance of using the wrong scene, and the producer can keep accurate notes for use during post-production. One of the many slates on the market is the VideoBoard, available from Casper Productions (Box 217, Superior, WI 54880) for \$24.95 plus \$3.50 shipping and handling.

Character generators with a wide selection of fonts and sizes cost hundreds of dollars. But you may have a terrific CG sitting right on your desk: your personal computer. For \$49.95, the Epyx Home Video Producer can

turn any Commodore 64/128, Apple II or IBM XT-compatible (with CGA graphics card and color composite output) into a video graphics tool that rivals the best consumer gear. The program creates borders, backgrounds and clip-art style graphics in 16 colors, and includes a text generator with 13 font and size choices.

The graphics can be scrolled, wiped or spiraled at several speeds, positioned anywhere on the screen, strung together to form sequences, and saved to disk. If you're using the software with an IBM PC, though, make sure you have a color composite output—the program does not produce color through the RGB port. Most software dealers carry the Epyx line, but in case yours doesn't, the company's phone number is 415-368-3200.

Once your sharp titles and tight edits are on tape, you'll want to add a soundtrack that's as lively as your images. An easy way to spice up the sound is to blend the original sound with music and narration, using an audio mixer. Solidex's Magicdub VM2000 accepts four stereo inputs and two microphone inputs, and includes a hand-held mic. Its suggested price is \$79.95. Lots of other mixers, with lots of different features, are available at prices from around \$50.

For less than the price of two CDs, Wilderness Productions (phone 916-577-3008) will supply sounds to run through that mixer—two hours of non-copyrighted background music, from classical to calypso. A two-hour VHS mono tape costs \$20 plus \$2.90 shipping and handling.

The company also offers three stock footage tapes. The first includes various titles; 50 video segments featuring landmarks, sports and other scenes; animated graphics; test patterns, including ten-second countdown, multiburst and color bars; and 30 minutes of music. The second tape substitutes slogans for the titles; the third tape comprises wedding music and titles. This is not amateur stuff—Wilderness Productions has produced network and cable TV programs. Each VHS tape costs \$12.95 plus \$2.90 shipping and handling.

—Brent Butterworth

BY BRENT BUTTERWORTH

Fall Video Preview **WILD THINGS**

Daring new designs add a dash of style to a hi-tech season.

If you think there's little new going on in video, you'll find plenty of surprises this fall. Video products boasting unusual new shapes and uses are on the way. With manufacturers paying more attention to matters of style, their new products flaunt an ergonomic savvy video gear has long lacked, as well as innovative applications of leading-edge technology.

Some manufacturers are taking extreme steps to whip their ideas into shape: Witness Hitachi's folding camcorder, which shoots like a conventional camcorder, then twists, for carrying, into a shape resembling a hardcover book. Others are taking a subtler route. JVC, for example, is introducing one of its most graceful camcorders—a subcompact VHS-C model—to compete against the new breed of miniature shooting machines such as Sony's TR5 and Panasonic's PV-10.

As boxy exteriors and no-frill designs go the way of eight-track tape, and cutting-edge design sweeps the video industry, here's an exclusive preview of next season's wildest new things:

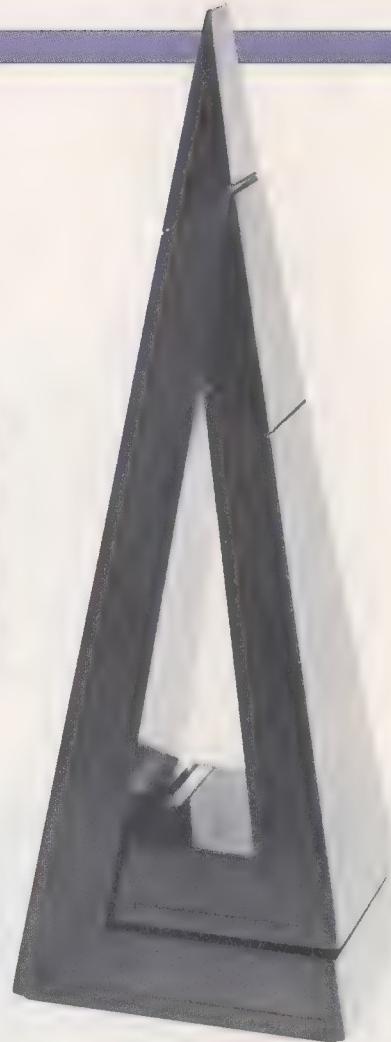


JVC SUBCOMPACT

With the new VHS-C GR-AX7, JVC brings simple lines and a familiar control layout to the ultra-mini camcorder field founded by Sony's TR5. JVC gave the camcorder smoother lines by building the microphone, tally light, and autofocus and white balance windows into a gently sloping front panel. The GR-AX7 boasts 6x power zoom, digital superimposition, 4-lux sensitivity and a trigger alarm.

VIDEO BOOM BOX

Although Sony's curvaceous FD-555 Mega Watchman suggests a Deco influence, the portable entertainment center offers modern conveniences like a sleep timer and Sony's sound expansion system. The unit combines a 4-1/2-inch black & white TV, an AM/FM stereo receiver and a cassette player.



HORNS OF PLENTY

Video accessories seldom look stylish, but Remex's new Bi-Klon video broadcasting system fits in with the most sophisticated interior designs. The Bi-Klon, priced at \$180, includes two horn-shaped units, one for a signal source—such as a VCR or a laserdisc player in a living room—and a second unit which connects to a TV set in another room, such as a bedroom. The living room Bi-Klon transmits audio and video signals (via radio frequencies in the largely unused gigahertz range) from the signal source to the bedroom Bi-Klon, which demodulates the signals so that a TV set can display them. The bedroom Bi-Klon also converts infrared remote control commands to RF signals, which it beams to the living room Bi-Klon. The living room unit then converts the RF signal back to IR and sends the commands to the deck. The unique IR-RF-IR capability allows users to control a living room VCR or laserdisc player from a bedroom or any other room they may choose.



HI-FI PERSONAL VIDEO

JVC hasn't limited its design energy to camcorders—it's also introducing a portable VHS hi-fi TVCR with controls integrated into a curving front panel. The HR-P1 combines a three-inch LCD color monitor with a speaker, a stereo audio output, four video heads and onscreen function displays. The HR-P1's stereo headphone jack lets viewers enjoy the audio glory of Dolby Stereo-encoded movies from a laptop-size unit.



HITACHI'S NEW TWIST

The Hitachi VM-C1A behaves like a normal VHS-C camcorder during taping, with the grip, zoom, controls and the viewfinder all in traditional spots. But when the shooting stops, the camera/grip section folds flush with the recorder to create a 2.2-pound, 2-3/4-inch-thick package. As the halves merge, power automatically shuts off and a cap slides over the lens. The new camcorder uses amorphous heads (made of a metal and glass compound) designed for low noise and enhanced durability. The VM-C1A's up-to-the-second features include twin-beam autofocus, a dual-time clock and wide-angle/tele macro lens.

PANASONIC'S FIRST LASERDISC PLAYERS

Combi players usually look pretty bland, but the LX-200 has an interesting graphic touch: the first Panasonic logo ever seen on a laserdisc player. The company plans to introduce the LX-200 this fall as one of its first two laser combi players. Although it's Panasonic's lowest-priced model, the LX-200 includes such advanced features as an S-video output, an optical audio output, 8x oversampling and auto reverse (Panasonic's term for automatic side changing). A high-end Prism model, the LX-1000, will include all the LX-200's features, along with jog/shuttle control, time-base correction and Multi-Stage Noise Shaping (MASH) audio circuitry. To ensure clear separation between signals, the LX-1000 incorporates digital Y/C separation and a separate transformer for its audio circuitry.



HIGH-END, LOW BULK

To cram high-end capabilities into the tiny GR-S505 Super-VHS-C hi-fi stereo camcorder, JVC set many controls into an unusually large lens barrel. With shooting options like 1/1500-second shutter and auto fade to any of eight colors, the GR-S505 reaches for new levels of performance. A four-page, eight-color digital superimpose feature, a manual iris option, animation and trigger alarm round out the extensive capabilities list. ▶



SONY VIDEO PRINTER

While Sony's new video printer keeps a low design profile, its end product — high-resolution, four-color prints — is pretty dazzling. The CVP-G500 produces three-by-four-inch prints from any NTSC camcorder, VCR or TV tuner in about 70 seconds. When the desired scene appears on the monitor, the user simply hits the "print" button.



FULL-SIZE FASHION

GE's styling focus rises to the surface in the CG650 full-size VHS camcorder. Inside, the machine carries compulsory features like fully automatic operation, a self-timer and low-light operation. But to wrap the CG650's standard-issue internals, GE sculpted a new, aerodynamic-looking chassis.

A VOTE FOR INTEGRATION

Mitsubishi's new integrated remote control combines a smooth, inviting look with extensive control powers. Buttons on the remote's face and under its sliding front panel operate all Mitsubishi Home Theater System components. It can also be programmed to control other manufacturers' devices. An LCD keeps the user posted on control status, and a pushbutton edge light illuminates control legends. Mitsubishi includes the remote with its A/V receivers, and sells it as a separate component. ■

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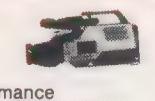
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BY FRANK LOVECE

THE LOST PICTURE SHOW

Not all classic Hollywood movies make it to video. Here's why.

Hollywood is running out of movies. The well is running dry. Studios will one day reach in and come up empty. And the sun will someday go supernova.

The fact is, countless classics have yet to come to video—including such seeming naturals as *Flamingo Road* (1949), *The Last Picture Show* (1971), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950) and *Children of Paradise* (1944), all major films in the cinematic canon. All are highly marketable, but all are MOV (missing on video). "You're always scratching your head," admits Ralph Tribbey, vice president of marketing at MGM/UA Home Video, "saying 'Geez, why wasn't this out before? How come that wasn't out before?'"

A variety of forces conspire to keep important movies out of video stores. Complications involving the rights to music or the original literary works on which many films are based often cause headaches for those trying to secure a video release. In other cases, video labels can't find a complete, undamaged copy of a particular film. And sometimes a film's owner simply lacks the resources or the will to market it properly on tape. But new pricing strategies—which put many films in the hands of collectors for very little cash—as well as ever-growing audiences for both classic and obscure movies, bode well for the future of MOV titles.

For film buffs and collectors, classic missing movies are the Holy Grails of video. Some MOV films are acknowledged classics (Gable, Harlow, Loy and Stewart in *Wife vs. Secretary*, 1936). Oth-

ers are fine but less well-known star vehicles (William Holden in the ghost comedy *The Remarkable Andrew*, 1942). Some are cult classics (*Paul Mazursky's The King of Marvin Gardens*, 1972). Others are contemporary or genre classics

current hit *Enemies, a Love Story*. His intriguing *Willie and Phil* (1980) and the acclaimed *Next Stop, Greenwich Village* (1976) are both MOV because, he says, "in the days before video, no one made deals for [the video rights to] the music in a movie. Those two movies feature music by [jazz stars] Claude Boling and Dave Brubeck. Until they go back and renegotiate, there's no video release. It's that simple." (*Next Stop, Greenwich Village* was available through CBS/Fox, but is now on "moratorium.")

As for his semi-autobiographical *Alex in Wonderland* (1972), Mazursky says he's "tried to buy it back from MGM for many years to get it out on cassette. I've talked to a guy who makes videos, who said he could sell 20,000 of them in a second. But MGM is no longer owned by the people who made the movie. They don't feel that connection to the movie, so it's sitting there someplace," he says tightly, "where no one can see it."

But sometimes it's the filmmakers who delay a video release. "When you release a movie to video," explains Larry Estes, vice president of programming and acquisition for RCA/Columbia, "you're supposed to have a legal document from everyone who participated for the literary rights, music, that kind of thing. If you don't get those licenses up front, you have to go back and get them at the time of the video. And sometimes," he understates, "that takes quite a while."

A movie studio now generally buys all ancillary or "aftermarket" rights—



Missing Link: Star vehicle *Wife vs. Secretary* is one of many major films unavailable on tape.

such as *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979).

MOV movies show up frequently on late night TV, though often in a heavily edited form that scarcely merits our attention. Some of these movies play the theatrical art-house circuit—at least what little there is left of it. But mostly, anyone wishing to see Buster Keaton's *The Cameraman* (1928) or the Jack Lemmon/Ernie Kovacs caper comedy *Operation Mad Ball* (1957) is out of luck until these movies reach video.

"Three of my movies are not out on cassette, though I'd like them to be," laments Paul Mazursky, director of the



Disappearing Acts: *Lust For Life* (left) recently surfaced on tape, but Paul Mazursky's *Alex in Wonderland* (above) and Buster Keaton's *The Cameraman* (below) are still missing on video.

which include video, cable, broadcast TV, airline, and "non-theatrical" (college and art-house) screenings—from a film's production company. Sometimes an independent production company strikes a video deal before a movie is even made. This is why Media Home Entertainment is releasing *Enemies, a Love Story* on cassette even though 20th Century Fox released it to theaters.

But before the video boom of the 1980s, video rights were not a concern. Films developed and owned by the big studios themselves usually lead to problem-free video releases. But when outside material was used, such as a play or a book on which a movie was based, or songs by composers outside the studio system, a video release can get very complicated.

Underlying literary rights long held up the video release of *Picnic* (1955), Joshua Logan's adaptation of the acclaimed William Inge play, which stars William Holden, Roz Russell, Kim Novak, and Cliff Robertson in his movie debut. And music clearance problems are why such Irving Berlin musicals as MGM's *Annie Get Your Gun* and Fox's *On the Avenue* (1937), *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (1938), *Tin Pan Alley* (1940) and *That Night in Rio* (1941) are unavailable though they were studio productions—the curmudgeonly

Berlin refused to negotiate for the video release of his music. (Since his death, CBS/Fox has been actively negotiating with Berlin's estate on the latter two.)

TROUBLESHOME TUNES

"Music clearances tend to be a nightmare," acknowledges Tribbey. "I think if you had to list the number-one problem, that's probably it." Tim Clott, executive vice president of Paramount Pictures' video division, agrees. "We have had a lot of problems with music," he says. "But for the most part, the music publishers—who own the rights to words and music, though not actual recordings by specific performers—have become much more realistic about this marketplace in the last year or two."

Since copyright laws and standing music-industry agreements generally allow anyone to pay a royalty and record a song, video companies can delete a performance by a holdout and replace it with one by a similar recording. For example, Foreigner's song "Urgent" was replaced by a cover version for the home video release of *Desperately Seeking Susan* (1985). The original Silhouettes version of "Get a Job," which plays over the end credits of *Trading Places* (1983) was also replaced on video with a remake. More often, however, problematic soundtrack songs are simply replaced by



LOST PICTURE

other, previously recorded songs—a dismal compromise caused by recalcitrant performers and cheapskate studios.

Sometimes, however, a particular song is too integral or a particular performer too distinct to be replaced. Other times it just isn't worth the effort. In these cases, a movie's video release can languish.

John Sayles' *Baby, It's You* (1983) went unreleased for several years, primarily because of the Frank Sinatra and Bruce Springsteen recordings on its soundtrack. "Finally," says Paramount's Clott, "Amy Robinson, who co-produced the movie, and John Sayles got behind this and went back to Springsteen and some of the other people and said, 'Let's be real about what the potential is for this movie! Let's come up with some realistic prices.'" Paramount negotiated rights for most of the music, he says, but "in a few instances, with Sayles' permission, we replaced some—but only where he felt it was appropriate. There were some things he just felt very strongly about, and we agreed with him."

The *Last Picture Show*, however, remains MOV despite years of effort by RCA/Columbia Home Entertainment. The label is "close to" finalizing its video release, says Estes, "but we're not by any means finished getting that one ready to come out." Negotiating rights to Hank Williams' music has been the primary sticking point, "but it's a lot of other stuff, too. The movie is almost wall-to-wall with radios turned on and classic television shows. A lot of things need to be taken care of." Other movies currently held up over music rights include *American Pop* (1981) and *Heavy Metal* (1981).

Another kind of problem arose with the fall of the old-fashioned studio system in the 1960s and '70s. The Hollywood studios, formerly start-to-finish movie factories, became less production companies than distributors. This meant that outside, independent producers had a new financial stake in the aftermarket, and began to lock horns with the studios' video arms.

Missing Musical: Betty Hutton in Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun*.



Sins of Omission:
The Rocky Horror Picture Show (above), *The High and the Mighty* (right) and *Flamingo Road* (below).



This is the case with the John Wayne films *McLintock!* (1963), distributed theatrically by United Artists, and *Hondo* (1953) and *The High and the Mighty* (1954), distributed by Warner Bros. Each was produced by ■ Wayne-

owned company—Batjac on the former, Wayne-Fellows on the latter two—and the rights reverted back to him. And as a result, says Tribbey, "the John Wayne estate can do with these three films as they please. We've tried to negotiate for them as a package, because we've already released [the Wayne westerns] *The Alamo*, *They Were Expendable*, *Red River* and *The Horse Soldiers*, and I think we'd do a good job marketing them. But we haven't been able to reach a deal."

Financial considerations often keep classic films MOV. Some movies, such as the cult classic musical *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), still play successfully in theaters; the producers see video release as competition. (U.S. video release, at least; the film is available in Japan—ironically, in U.S.-compatible VHS.) Other films have evergreen lives on the "non-theatrical" circuit. Buster Keaton's brilliant *The Navigator* (1924) and *Seven Chances* (1925) are unavailable on video since Keaton's widow and the late Raymond Rohauer, her business partner, chose to hold out. But with the revival houses dwindling, Rohauer's successor, Alan Twiman, may decide to give Keaton's genius the full video exposure it deserves.

Other times, a film doesn't physically exist in a usable form—it's estimated that half of all the movies made are irretrievably lost or damaged. "We had *Flamingo Road* scheduled for April, but the source material is just so bad," Tribbey says sadly. The [master] negative's not in good shape, and the [master] print ele-



ments have been stretched to the point where you can't get the film to lay down properly." A video transfer was attempted, he says, "but it just wasn't acceptable. I seriously doubt we're going to see that one out." (TV stations that run the movie have 16mm prints, which are far from optimal for home-video duplication.) Other times, original film elements exist in good shape, but are incomplete: Roman Polanski's *The Fearless Vampire Killers* is unavailable on tape because MGM/UA has yet to put together a definitive edition. (Both 98- and 107-minute versions of the movie exist.)

In the vast majority of cases, however, movies are MOV because video companies don't see a market for them. "We have a lot of titles like *Arizona Bushwackers* (1968) and *Aaron Slick from Punkin Crick* (1952) that may not really have a marketplace," says Clott. "And there are origination costs in mastering and creating packaging and all that. There are a lot of movies that probably may not end up on video."

That's a shame, since, to take just these two examples, the routine western *Arizona Bushwackers* boasts a James Cagney narration—his only work on film between his retirement in 1961 and his return in 1981—while the largely unmemorable *Aaron Slick* is interesting as Dinah Shore's last movie musical—and for Dick (*Bewitched*) York as her leading man! Almost every movie, in fact, has something of interest to someone: Obsessive fans have latched onto the almost surreally schlocky movies of Ray Dennis Steckler (*The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies*, 1963), let alone James Cagney and Dinah Shore.

But, notes Jamie White, president of the independent video label Lumivision, "studios need to sell a huge minimum amount of a title to make anything back. I just wish they would sub-license some of their smaller titles to companies like us, who can make it selling just 3,000 units. Then everybody makes something and these titles get out." White's suggestion makes sense; in fact, RCA/Columbia has sub-licensed titles in the past to mass-merchandise specialists such as Goodtimes Home Video. Without that arrangement, no less than Jack Lemmon's movie debut, in the delightful George Cukor comedy *It Should Happen to You* (1954), would have been unjustifiably MOV.

Fortunately for movie buffs, the video marketplace is changing. The recently released Frank Sinatra musical *Pal Joey* was originally cleared and set for video in 1987. But, says RCA/Columbia's Estes, "It didn't get the attention from retailers we thought it would. We

announced and it got a mediocre response from the field. We waited awhile, and for whatever reason it's now more attractive to the consumer—maybe," he admits, "because it's ten dollars less than before."

That sort of repricing has, in fact, rejuvenated the classics market. Virtually every video label is re-releasing its film library in remastered and repackaged versions at sell-through prices in the under-\$20 realm. They're also inventively promoting collectible titles.

MGM/UA, for instance, reaped great goodwill with its "Viewer's Choice" Poll, which brought the long-awaited release of Vincente Minelli's 1956 *Lust for Life*, starring Kirk Douglas. The same company is doing a "Retailer's Choice" poll later this year, and, in June, a cult-comedy promotion that brings to video such classics-of-their-kind as *The Americanization of Emily* (1964), *The Loved One* (1965) and *Smile* (1975).

Other companies, too, are bigger than ever in the classics game. MCA has its Gene Shalit's Critic's Choice line; RCA/Columbia has introduced a line called Columbia Pictures Classics. And CBS/Fox and others release a steady stream of library titles. But with perhaps tens of thousands of movies in Holly-

wood's vaults, there will always be MOV titles.

But that's okay—we'll always have something to look forward to. As Estes puts it, "people keep on buying and renting classics year after year. That's why they're classics—because people always want to see them."

TECH TIP

By the numbers

If you're recording a program longer than two hours, you may want to use the SP mode as long as possible, then switch to EP, since most VCRs automatically play back at the correct speed. To calculate exactly when to make the switch, double the program's length in minutes. Next subtract the length of the tape in meters (246 meters for a T-120, 327m for a T-160). Divide the result by 1.3. This will give you the time (in minutes) to spend in EP. Subtract this time from the program length to calculate the time to spend in SP.

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BY MARTIN LEVINE

HDTV HORSE RACE

As developers race to be first with the best, HDTV may be only 4 years away.



Twin Peaks: Zenith created this HDTV image (left) by quadrupling the information in a standard TV image (right).

After years of speculation, announcements and political infighting, all the ground rules are finally in place for the United States TV industry to make a quantum leap to the next generation of television. And in one form or another, it appears Americans will be watching high-definition TV within four years.

At the end of March, the Federal Communications Commission said it expects to choose an advanced television standard — either full HDTV or a so-called Enhanced Definition TV system that would serve as a transition toward HDTV — before June 1993. "The commission's primary goal in these proceedings is to assure the development of a technically excellent advanced television service," stated the announcement. In effect, the FCC is saying that if there's a working HDTV system available by 1993, that will be its choice. If not, it will consider EDTV — but not before.

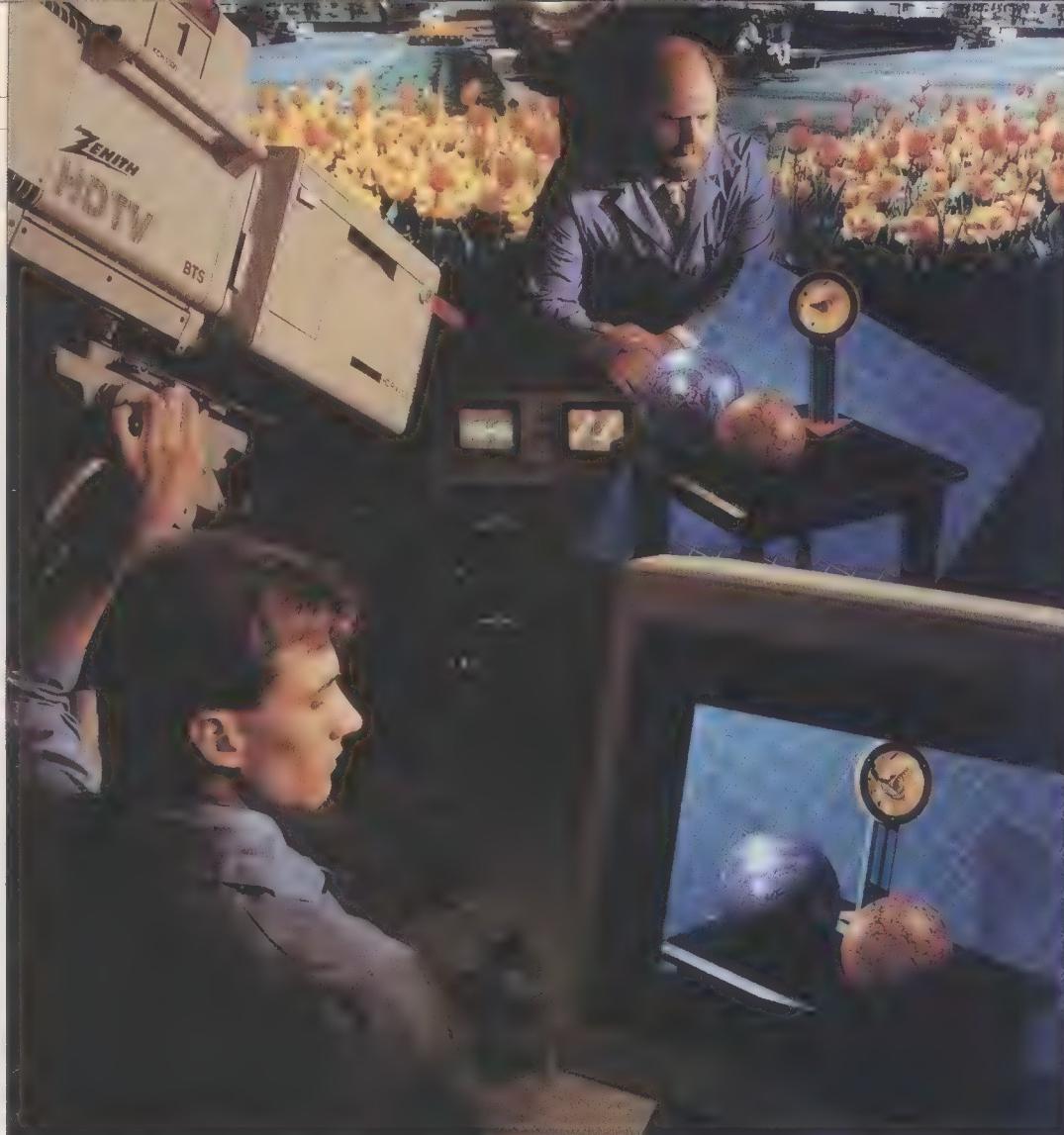
The announcement has shaken up the pecking order among proponents of advanced television systems. But by most accounts, it was long overdue. And it has everyone involved gearing up for the last lap in what has been a marathon process.

"The happy thing is [the FCC] decided we're not going to settle for second best," says one executive who's closely involved in HDTV work. "The decision puts practicality back in the process and sets some deadlines."

Yet these hopeful developments obscure a potentially more important point: The U.S. is moving to the forefront in the worldwide development of advanced television systems. Many Americans may still end up watching high-definition images on TV sets made in Japan, but crucial decisions regarding broadcast pictures and sound quality are being made in the U.S. And this represents a startling change.

Just three years ago the so-called MUSE HDTV system proposed by Japan's public TV network, NHK, was considered a heavy favorite to win in the U.S. as well as in Japan. But time and

Martin Levine is the former editor of Consumer Electronics magazine. He now writes about high technology for several national publications and daily newspapers.



Two Ways to Win:
Zenith engineers test
Spectrum Compatible
picture (left); Thom-
son's Joseph Donahue
(below) checks out pro-
totype wide-screen
monitor by RCA.

technical advances by rivals have eroded its lead. "MUSE is based on 1970s technology," asserts Dr. Peter Bingham, vice president of technology for Philips Consumer Electronics Company and a key figure in the Advanced Television Research Consortium that unites Philips, Thomson Consumer Electronics, NBC and the David Sarnoff Research Center. "It works, but it's spectrally inefficient."

"The Japanese started sooner and may be ahead as far as direct-broadcast satellites are concerned, but terrestrially I think the United States may be ahead," adds Richard Wiley, chairman of the Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Systems, a private industry group that will oversee tests of proposed HDTV and EDTV systems for the U.S. and report its findings to the FCC. Wiley points out, for example, that MUSE is an analog system, while many of its U.S. rivals are likely to incorporate digital signal processing.

MUSE was also conceived as a direct-broadcast satellite HDTV system, and its developers were not constrained by the narrow six-megahertz bandwidth

assigned to each channel in the NTSC system. But since any HDTV system chosen for the U.S. will have to perform over the airwaves for terrestrial reception, NHK engineers have been scrambling to develop compressed versions of MUSE that will perform as well as its newer competitors — and still meet bandwidth criteria here and in Japan, where broadcasters, noting the American emphasis on broadcast reception, are pushing for a similar approach.

"Will the Japanese be foolish enough to spend time, resources and effort on a system with no base beyond the Japanese domestic market? I don't think so," argues a stateside executive with a major Japanese consumer electronics manufacturer. "We're not going to spend a lot of money until we know where the U.S. market is."

NARROWING CHOICES

That day is fast approaching. Manufacturers of TV sets and broadcast equipment, and anyone else whose future is tied to the fate of U.S. advanced television broadcasts, now know that so-called augmentation systems, which re-



quire more than six megahertz for HDTV alone, are dead. If Zenith's or any of the other proposed simulcast systems actually work outside a development laboratory by the FCC's deadline, then the U.S. will move directly to HDTV. If not, then some form of EDTV might fill the gap while simulcast-oriented developers eliminate the bugs from their systems.

The FCC decision has also forced HDTV engineers working on systems for the U.S. to focus on simulcast systems that will squeeze a full HDTV signal into six megahertz. There are six remaining developers seeking FCC approval — the Advanced Television

'We can have receivers on the market in late '93 or early '94.'

Research Consortium, NHK, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Faroudja Laboratories, Zenith and Production Services, Inc. All but Faroudja have at least experimented with simulcasting in recent months. But while NHK has developed one form of MUSE that fits within six megahertz, it reportedly lacks the resolution of its simulcast competition. And the Research Consortium is far from having a working system, say consortium insiders.

Bingham concedes that Philips believed simulcasting would prove impractical,

HDTV's Dark Horse

Production Services, Inc. is one of only six HDTV system developers with a shot at gaining the approval of the Federal Communications Commission, yet the company is a virtual unknown even to its competitors.

The privately funded Tucson-based company has operated in relative obscurity, in large part by choice, but if its system works, PSI may score the greatest underdog victory since the 1969 New York Mets stunned baseball.

PSI co-founder Richard Gerdes, an analog circuit designer with a 30-year background in video, insists his system can do what other developers say is impossible: squeeze a full-blown HDTV signal and a conventional NTSC signal within the same six megahertz frequency channel. Not only would this meet the FCC's mandate that a U.S. HDTV system maintain compatibility with NTSC, but it would do so using only half the spectrum sought by other developers.

"We use a new modulation technology to add information to the spectrum without interference," Gerdes says. "We alter the shape of the carrier and transmit the result of that altered wave shape." He calls the technology "waveform modulation" and says, "It's as different from AM and FM as AM is from FM."

PSI has already developed a commercial product using waveform modulation for NTSC broadcasts: an encoder and decoder that allows an NTSC station to broadcast two channels simultaneously from one transmitter. "You could tune to channel 4A or 4B using the decoder," Gerdes says. The FCC has already granted an experimental license for Channel 11 in Tucson, a Fox Network affiliate, to begin testing the system.

Gerdes expects to begin selling "a limited number" of decoders to the public about now, and to have consumer-grade boxes in full production by the year's end. Still to be determined, though, is which company will manufacture the black boxes and how PSI will distribute them.

As with everything connected to HDTV, however, PSI's waveform modulation has generated fierce disagreements. "They will have to rewrite the laws of physics for it to happen," insists Wayne Luplow, the head of Zenith's HDTV research program. "It cannot work within a six megahertz bandwidth."

To which Gerdes replies, just wait and see. —ML

tical, "because it appeared it would take more than six megahertz to broadcast HDTV." Still, he adds that the consortium won't scrap its work on augmentation until it develops a working simulcast system.

With one exception (see sidebar), all the simulcast systems envision broadcasters transmitting two versions of their programming: an NTSC or NTSC/EDTV signal over one six-megahertz channel, and an HDTV signal over a second six-megahertz channel. And with bandwidth space a scarce—and

hotly contested—resource, simulcasting is an attractive approach politically as well as technologically.

It consumes less bandwidth space than the augmentation systems, requiring at least nine megahertz, that were in vogue only a year ago. And at some point—perhaps 50 years from now, when HDTV receivers completely replace NTSC sets—broadcasters theoretically could end NTSC broadcasts and open that portion of the broadcast spectrum to new stations or uses.

In addition, signal processing technology allows simulcast systems to exploit the unused bandwidth that separates active TV channels without interfering with them. "That is a practical benefit to the simulcast systems," says Wiley. "Of course, this depends on if it works."

Starting later this year, everyone should begin to find out. In part through the Advanced Television Test Center in Alexandria, Virginia, and possibly in Canada in cooperation with the Canadian government, Wiley's advisory committee will begin testing eight proposed systems from the six remaining developers. The tests are tentatively scheduled to begin in October and finish by the end of 1991. By then, the prospects for simulcast systems in general, and Zenith's in particular, should be clear.

Zenith's Spectrum Compatible system uses a 787-line progressive-scan process that effectively doubles the number of horizontal and vertical lines, for roughly four times the picture detail of NTSC. By skimping on resolution during fast-motion sequences, when picture details flash by too fast for the eye to comprehend, the full HDTV signal is squeezed into a standard six-megahertz channel. Just as important, since the HDTV signal doesn't interfere with adjacent NTSC signals, the Spectrum Compatible channel can occupy the currently empty channels used to separate NTSC stations. Zenith says it could bring this system to market using either a 16:9 wide-aspect ratio or the conventional 4:3 ratio of NTSC.

DOLLARS & MEGAHERTZ

But Zenith engineers express their most compelling argument for Spectrum Compatible in dollars and cents rather

than megahertz. "We can have Spectrum Compatible receivers on the market in late '93 or early '94 at a premium of \$500 more than equivalent NTSC sets," asserts Wayne Luplow, Zenith's executive director of Advanced Research and Development. This is thousands of dollars less than estimates by other HDTV developers—and is possible primarily, explains Luplow, because Zenith is building more of the intelligence for its system into the encoder, rather than the TV set decoder, and has significantly reduced the memory needed to store HDTV images.

While Zenith has been viewed as a lone wolf up against larger competitors, the company has at least one important ally. Zenith has been working with AT&T Microelectronics for the last 18 months on signal processing and receiver technology, with AT&T concentrating on the integrated circuits that are at the core of all HDTV systems.

At the National Association of Broadcasters' spring convention in Atlanta, Zenith displayed computer-generated Spectrum Compatible images in public for the first time. It also announced a production standard for program producers. Still, some of Zenith's detractors—chiefly those favoring a two-stage approach to HDTV—argue that Spectrum Compatible, or any other HDTV system, will take too much time and money. If Americans want to see a better television picture in this century, they say, it will have to be EDTV.

Central to the position of EDTV's proponents is the assertion that true HDTV is at least ten years off, largely because of the prohibitive costs of HDTV receivers and broadcast equipment. "I don't think it's going to be this century," argues Dr. Joseph Donahue, senior vice president for Technology and Business Development for Thomson Consumer Electronics, and point man in Thomson's ACTV program. Donahue insists it will cost local broadcasters "tens of millions of dollars" to convert to HDTV, compared with "less than one million" for ACTV. "It doesn't become ACTV until the transmitter. It's a form of NTSC until then, with a wide screen and extra resolution."

ACTV is the centerpiece around

continued on page 116



Ready on the Line: Thomson's Marion, Indiana plant, where wide-screen HDTV tubes will be made.

Looking Ahead To A Hi-Def Decade

Las Vegas oddsmakers will make book on almost anything, but even the low roller crowd has yet to set a line for the Federal Communications Commission's HDTV competition. This is just as well, since no serious bettor could make sense of the shifting fortunes that have characterized recent events over the last two years. Nevertheless, the course HDTV will have to follow in coming years is finally taking shape.

1990. A panel of television experts and consumers, under auspices of the Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Systems and the Advanced Television Test Center, begins evaluating eight proposed systems from six developers.

1991. Tests are completed by year's end. But based on informal reactions during the year one or more system proponents will gamble they will win by continuing to develop receivers and broadcast equipment.

1992. The Advisory Committee files recommendations with the FCC. Prototype receivers are set up in airports and other public places to demonstrate the system with pictures from the Olympics in Barcelona.

1993. The FCC adopts an advanced television standard for the United States: either a single HDTV system, or a two-stage system starting with an extended-definition (EDTV) phase followed in orderly fashion by true HDTV. Television set manufacturers allied with the winning system scramble to produce a few thousand sets in time for the Christmas sales season. At the same time, one or two TV networks—either broadcast or cable—prepare limited transmissions using the winning system.

1994-2000. The major broadcast, cable and satellite networks slowly incorporate the new system. TV set sales build slowly, largely because consumers balk at paying a hefty premium for hardware when programming is sparse.

2001 and Beyond. Local broadcasters begin transmitting HDTV to the hundreds of thousands of consumers, perhaps a few million, who have purchased receivers. HDTV slowly begins to dominate television, just as color TV gradually eclipsed black & white.



Early Entry:
Wide-screen 50-inch
TV by Sharp.

—ML

BY TY HARRINGTON

HANDS-ON EXCLUSIVE

FREED AT LAST

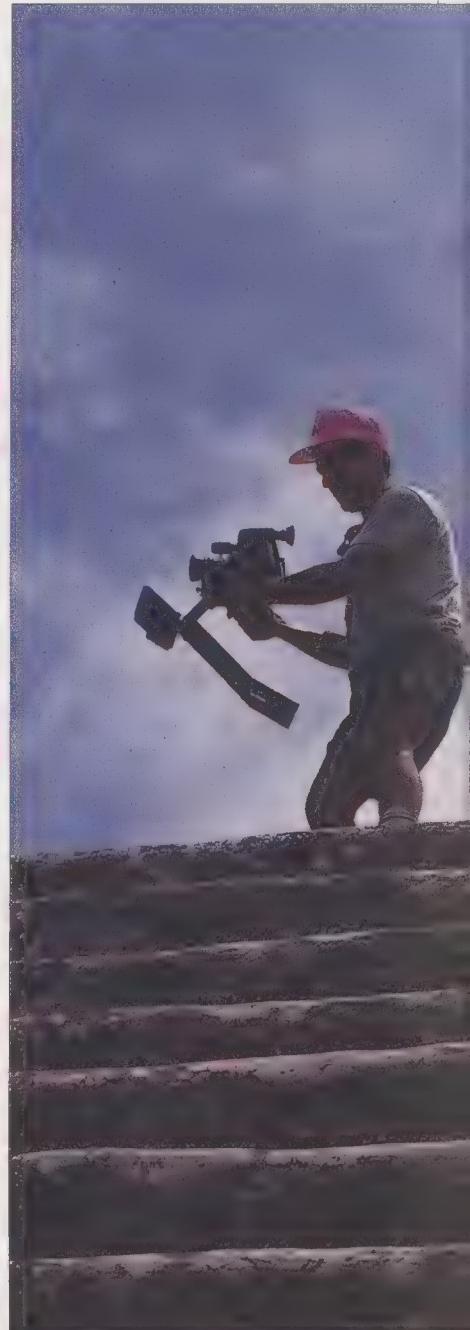
We field test the Steadicam JR, a liberating new accessory that gives camcorders a freedom of movement they never before possessed.

The mouth of a submerged volcano glides suddenly into view, its perfect circle of cobalt blue bordered by a turquoise barrier reef. As the pilot of our twin-engine plane swoops southward toward the volcanic rim, my camcorder's microphone picks up the guttural thrum of the engine. I pan upward from the control panel's diving altimeter as we descend and out the plane's windshield—where a landing strip is hurtling toward the lens. The wheels briefly squeal and we touch down.

Instead of stopping the tape, I keep the scene rolling as we step from the small plane and cross the gravel runway. Still shooting, the camcorder looks both ways before preceding us into the grass-roofed airport of Belize City, capital of the lush Central American republic of Belize. Later, on a TV set, these scenes look so smooth and steady, so free of a small camcorder's normal jitteriness that it seems as if we must surely have arrived by magic carpet.

What made this footage possible was a startling new accessory called the Steadicam JR. It was developed by Garrett Brown, who won an Oscar in the '60s for inventing the Steadicam—a \$40,000, 90-pound contraption that keeps a movie camera steady and level, even while the cameraman walks, jogs or jumps through a scene. The instrument changed the look and feel of movie action, generating such breathtaking moments as the wolf-eye views in *Wolfen*, the pursuit through the maze in *The Shining* and the forest chases in *Return of the Jedi*.

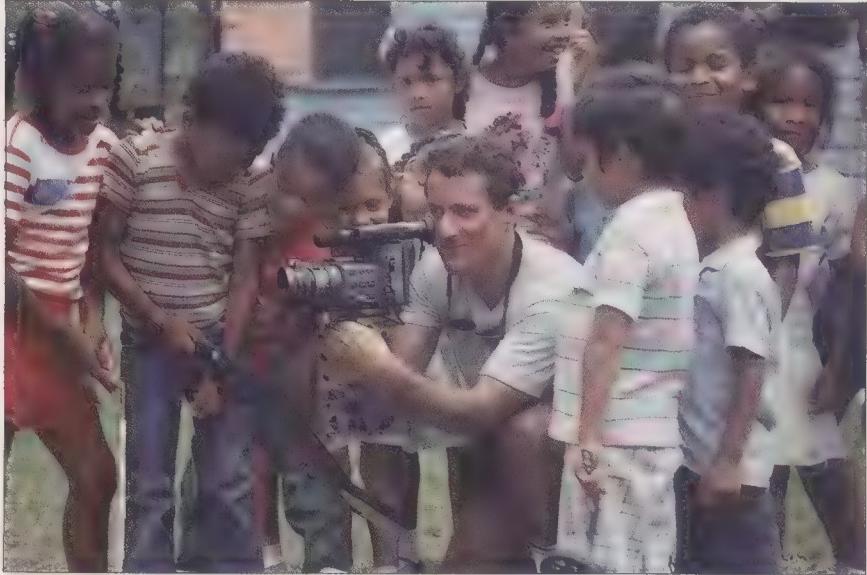
Now, after more than three years of research, Brown has downsized his original invention to make it suitable for lightweight Compact VHS, Super VHS-C, 8mm and Hi8 camcorders. The Steadicam JR (as in "jay-are," not "junior") promises not only to take the jiggle out of hand-held videography, but to make the flowing textures and dynamic rhythms of professionally shot film available to everyone. Since keeping the camcorder steady is among the biggest problems amateur shooters confront, the Steadicam JR could actually transform the look of home videos.



PHOTOS: HARRINGTON COMMUNICATIONS/JIM SCOTT



High & Dry: The author tests the JR while strapped to a speedboat, and atop the temples at Tikal.



To find out if this two-pound wonder could deliver the spectacular look and feel of its big brother, I took the JR to Central America for a hands-on travel test. Before I departed, Brown delivered a quick course in handling the JR. His directions for mounting camcorders and learning the Steadicam's unfamiliar feel are re-created in a detailed, hour-long instructional tape that comes with the device.

And users are advised to pay attention. The Steadicam is vastly different from any other video product consumers have experienced. Indeed, the first time I gripped a camcorder-loaded JR it felt as uncontrollable as it looked, more like a loose cannon than a precision instrument.

The JR consists of the platform on which the camcorder rests, a pistol grip for maneuvering it, and a long V-shaped balance arm with a black & white LCD monitor perched in the crook. Its natural position is fully extended, with the balance arm

Juniors Meet the JR:
Belizian youngsters
check out the shot in
progress by peering at
the JR's external
monitor.

FREE AT LAST

pointed downward. But the JR also folds so that shooters can work it from a traditional shoulder-based position.

The JR comes with a small ten-watt camcorder light, batteries, Brown's instructional cassette and a manual. Priced at \$579, it's only available at present from Cinema Products Corporation, which manufacturers both the JR and two professional versions of the Steadicam. (For further information, write or call Cinema Products at 3211 South La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90016; 800-955-5052.)

The JR achieves its amazing stability with the help of a gimbaled joint between the camcorder platform and the pistol grip. This mechanism, Brown promised, would make possible "smooth, controlled camerawork from a speeding plane, a speeding boat or driving down a rough road" — challenges to which the JR would soon be put.

But first I had to learn how to use it. It took two hours of serious practice before I began to realize that the JR's bark is worse than its bite. I soon found it simple to operate at a fairly proficient level. Although I continued to wonder about what effect five or more pounds resting in my hand all day would have on my muscles, Brown reassured me. "Your adrenaline will carry you through," he predicted. "You won't even notice the weight." Easy to say, I thought, for a man who gracefully maneuvers the JR's 90-pound brother.



Hill Hopper: The author jogs downhill while using the JR's monitor to focus the camcorder on a stream.



Flight Control:
Profile of the Steadicam Jr., with a Handycam in shooting position, shows the relationship between the stage, the balance arm, the grip and the monitor (also inset).

I planned my journey to Belize, and a side trip to neighboring Guatemala, to include travel by bush plane and virtually every other mode of transportation. These would actively test the JR's powers. A jungle nation, bordered by the world's second largest barrier reef, Belize is so sparsely populated that it doesn't have a single traffic light. Yet, steeped in legend as the ancient habitat of the Mayan Empire, it seemed like a perfect place to field-test the Steadicam while gathering some unusual footage at the same time.

To make sure the JR would get a challenging workout, I packed four camcorders with my gear. At 2.2 pounds, Ricoh's R-680 — the company's version of Sony's 8mm CCD-TR5 camcorder — was the smallest and lightest of the quartet. The Hi8 Canon A1, weighing 3.8 pounds and packed with automatic features, represented somewhat heavier, more sophisticated models. To check out the performance of Compact VHS models on the JR, I carried Minolta's Master Series C-50, which weighs 3.5 pounds (including, as above, tape and battery). Sony's prosumer EVC-X10 rounded out the group. This unusual 8mm Handycam is fitted with a mount for interchangeable lenses and a reinforced body that makes it heavier than virtually all other small camcorders.

I made my base at the remote Journey's End Resort on San Pedro, a jungle island just inside the barrier reef. Each morning, I took the four-mile boat ride

to the nearest village, from where I embarked on a series of daylong excursions up and down the coast and deep into the mountainous interior. Each day I challenged the JR to cope with a new set of shooting conditions.

Day one: I strap myself to the front of a speedboat as it races up Belize's narrow, black-water canals. Despite ten-knot headwinds, the Steadicam delivers glass-smooth footage. A water-level vista of mangrove roots flies past the lens. An unbroken pan up to the boat's bow captures its wild, bouncing motion as small waves break across the top. Miraculously, the Canon camcorder remains perfectly steady.

Not only did all the camcorders tested on the JR prove easy to control, the JR's external monitor — one of its strongest features — relieved me of the need to check each shot's progress in the camcorder's viewfinder. Viewable even in full equatorial sunlight, the adjustable five-inch screen facilitated arms-length operation, effectively turning my arms into a flexible crane. Equally important, the monitor left both my eyes free to follow the action, to scan ahead and to establish rapport with the subjects of a shot or anyone else who happened to be watching. The JR actually makes a camcorder less intimidating because it lets bystanders share the pleasure of your shooting by peeking at the monitor.

The chief downside to using the JR is pilot error. It takes skill to use it well and patience, even tenacity, to master.

You will experience occasions when your grip on the control gimbal slips and the floating platform drifts away from the subject. At these times you have to steer it back to regain control.

There is also an initial tendency to be dazzled by the JR's results—and forget that it is not a panacea for all situations. There will still be many times when old-fashioned eye-to-the-viewfinder videography delivers the best shots. However, the more I used the JR, the more I found myself seduced by its possibilities.

STEADICAM ALOFT

My second shooting excursion begins as I step into a single-engine bush plane for a two-hour aerial survey. For 50 miles we fly above the blue-and-green reef, past small tropical islands, shipwrecks and submerged volcanos. I load the Steadicam first with the Minolta C-50, then with the Canon A1, putting the swift and accurate autofocus mechanisms on both camcorders to excellent use. Again the footage is silkenly watchable.

Although the Steadicam is compatible with all small camcorders, each camcorder I tried reacted differently to the Steadicam. For example, the Minolta C-50 has no controls to manually operate either the zoom lens or the focus. This proved to be a serious shortcoming, although not all shooters may find this to be the case.

Brown had remarked that the Steadicam works best with a camcorder on fully automatic settings. And, indeed, with one exception I found it difficult to adjust any controls on a camcorder in mid-shot except to manually roll the zoom to another fixed focal length.

The exception was provided by the infrared remote control that comes with the Canon A1. The remote made it possible for a second person to smoothly zoom, while I steered the camcorder, without disrupting the JR's balance. In fact, even zoomed to a full telephoto position the footage the Canon A1 shot from the air is so steady that it is possible to follow manta rays and other large fish swimming amid the coral.

Throughout our flight the plane vibrates like a tuning fork, jolting us with G-forces and, not infrequently, runs smack into airpockets. Yet the JR retains its remarkable poise and delivers exciting scenes that flow with a professional-looking flair.

That afternoon I switch to a 60-foot catamaran for a sea-level view of the coast. Pitching and yawing with the waves, I somehow manage the slightly awkward process of mounting each of my camcorders onto the JR. The tiny

Ricoh R-680 is wonderfully light, making the JR's stage so easy to control that I can hold and steer the JR with one hand (both hands are usually required), helping me to capture close-ups of other passengers and even stick with them, by hanging over the side, as they jump into the water to snorkel. But when the wind gusts to 12 knots the Ricoh's light weight starts to work against it.

The other three camcorders are all substantial enough to stand up to the wind, although I now need both hands to maintain control. The Sony X-10 feels exceedingly well balanced. Its square base gives it the most secure grip on the JR. The X-10's ability to accept different lenses also gives it a clear advantage in capturing deck action, including dramatic wide-angle shots of the sails going up and soaring in the wind. I find I can pan straight up the jib then rotate the camcorder so it seems to free-fall down the mainsail to the Belizian flag astern before settling into a steady wide shot of the entire vessel bucking and breaking through the sea.

When windsurfers appear, bearing toward us at full tilt, I hold the action on the screen for as long as I want. Thanks to the Canon A1, now mounted on the JR, the autofocus stays crisp. For a lengthier zoom and long telephoto shots of a daring windsurfer crossing the crashing waters of the reef, I grab the camcorder by its handgrip (a practice Brown does not recommend) and switch to its viewfinder. This permits more accurate compositions, the use of a polarizing filter (for which I must freeze the automatic focus) and better exposure control.

As I gained experience, I learned to keep a sharp eye on the JR's built-in carpenter's level at the same time as I navigated and steered the unit, all the while checking my position to make sure I wasn't about to stumble. My attention cycle rotated like that of a race car driver scanning first the road, then the mirrors, then the gauges. At first I had to consciously practice scanning from the subject to the monitor to the level to my present position, then to where I was headed. But with time, the process became second nature.

For example, I shot Journey's End by asking owner John Rietz to tell me the resort's story as we drove around in a nearly silent electric golf cart. In one extended shot, I step from the cart and follow Rietz into the restaurant, through the kitchen and upstairs into a luxury villa while he describes a Christmas holiday Jimmy Carter and his family spent at the resort. The Ricoh's autofocus proved too slow for the fast-changing close-ups in this scene. However, the other cam-

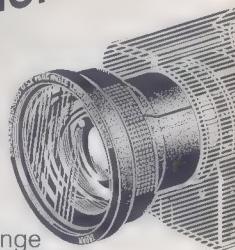
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coders handled this type of situation well—and the JR just took it in stride.

TAPING TIKAL

As my confidence grew I began searching for the edges of the JR's flight envelope. On my next to last day we flew across the border to Guatemala, then traveled by truck to Tikal, site of the largest excavated Mayan temples. Once there, I bound up the steep steps

of the highest temple, oblivious to the 90-degree heat and humidity. As I climb I pan slowly, taping the magnificent ruins from every conceivable angle.

On my first climbs the heavier camcorders tend to tilt the JR's stage forward, threatening to collapse the unit into its folding position, especially when I aim sharply downward. This is solved by lifting a joint cover at the point where the stage connects to the upper

shaft of the balance arm, and tightening the screw.

I soon discover angles that would be impossible without the JR, such as climbing alongside another traveler and taping him from the side—starting with a shot at his feet walking toward the pyramid then gently panning up while raising the camcorder to the level of my waist. On another climb, I steer the JR to hold the edges of the weathered stone walls as I turn corners, varying my pace so that I seemingly catch up to people in front of me or, spinning abruptly, capture someone just coming into view behind me.

High atop the greatest of the temples I pan broadly across the surrounding jungle, then swing the JR to rest the lens on the narrow surface upon which I stand. With the scene still rolling, the camcorder moves slowly toward the edge. Once there it keeps on going, then falls several feet down before catching hold, slowly widening its reach to take in the entire length of the temple's sheer wall as tourists scurry about hundreds of feet below. (In this case, the Ricoh R-680's slow autofocus ideally matches the tempo of the shot.)

That evening, back at Journey's End, watching the day's footage with other guests, I realize the JR's potential. The fluid energy of its footage has viewers sitting on the edges of their chairs, jittery with the sense of real adventure. When I appear to step off the temple's edge into space, a moment of vertigo surges through the room.

LEARNING NEW TRICKS

As my awkwardness with the Steadicam faded, I began to move away from habits that treated video composition as a series of static exercises. More than ever, the camcorder became an instrument capable of capturing events in real-time images that move with the complicated patterns of real life.

The footage of my last day in Belize begins with a rollercoaster view out the window of a lurching pickup truck, except that viewers feel like they're riding on a running board, staring first ahead, then at the road, then down at the truck's bouncing tire, then back down at the road as the truck crosses a narrow bridge—and the earth breathtakingly falls away to reveal a torrent of racing water.

In the afternoon, I explore an enormous rock cave. I set the JR so it hugs the ground, then send the lens flying along the floor, up the walls and between stalagmites, gently tilting its horizon like a craft in flight. Soon I'm at a series of eight-foot waterfalls. In the dis-

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PROGRAMMING

Film of the Month

The Little Mermaid

1989. Anim. Wr./dir. J. Musker, R. Clement. 82m. (G) Hi ss cc \$26.99. Disney.

Only time can bestow true "family classic" status on a film, but indications are strong that *The Little Mermaid* may live up to its hype. After a string of animated features both misguided (*The Black Cauldron*, *Oliver and Company*) and mediocre (*The Great Mouse Detective*, *The Rescuers*), the once mighty Disney animation department hit the target straight on with this musical adaptation of the Danish fairy tale favorite. At last count, the story of a headstrong young mermaid in love with a human prince had grossed over \$80 million, making it the third biggest film of last year, and the highest-grossing animated feature ever.

Unlike many children's films that make their bucks on the repeat-hungry nature of kid audiences, this blockbuster can be embraced even if you don't store Breakfast Bears in the kitchen cabinet. This mermaid recaptures the elusive magic that has been missing in most Disney cartoon features since the heydays of *Snow White* and *Cinderella*.

First there's the score, a witty pastiche of film and theatrical hooks that's better than most of the last decade's worth of overblown spectacles on Broadway, and

well deserving of its two musical Oscars. The melodies are memorable and hummable, and the lyrics are full of clever wordplay and plot or character enhancements. When a comic song can move parents to tears of laughter, as Chef Louis' "Les Poisson" does, you know you're not watching a just-for-kiddies show.

The characters, too, are the best from the drawing board in years. If you'll pardon my paradox, they're three-dimensional cartoons. Ariel, the rebellious



The Magic Returns: Ariel (above) follows her heart while Ursula (left) connives in *The Little Mermaid*.

heroine who defies her overprotective father to visit the land of humans, is a likable if self-centered little nymph (except for the flippers, she pretty much personifies modern, precocious, flirtatious teenagers). That she basically runs away from home at 15 to live with her boyfriend is an odd storyline for a Disney tale to take, but then she is defying daddy's prejudice, and a hint of the subversive is an element in most classic children's tales.

From the divinely diabolical Ursula—a sea witch who cons Ariel to trade her voice for legs in a campy, vampish hoot of a number—to Sebastian the reggae-singing crab, a less smarmy version of Jiminy Cricket, the supporting characters are a blast, with the exception of the handsome yet bland (why is this typical of Prince Charming?) Prince Eric. The cast of voice-over performers, including Buddy Hackett, Pat Carroll and Jodi Benson, chomp into their roles with contagious glee.

As with the best of Disney's feature cartoons, quality animation here offers

instant appeal to the home video viewer, and doesn't generally suffer the negative effects that often haunt transfers of highly stylized theatrical features to tape. Though even Disney has resorted to computerized short-cuts in its most recent films, *Mermaid's* visual palette is more detailed and more delightful than any recent efforts. Nearly subliminal touches—the way Sebastian's claws clickety-clack on sea rocks, or the constant motion of Ariel's hair, tossed by underwater currents—show the infinite care that went into this production.

Rules are made to be broken, and Disney has smashed one of its own commandments by releasing one of its animated features to home video within a year of its theatrical release. Perhaps the only person who wouldn't appreciate the film is Hans Christian Andersen, whose original tale let the mermaid lose the prince and become a disembodied spirit. Isn't it just like Hollywood to screw around with the author's original script? But the result is a winner. And yes, perhaps a classic. —Marianne Meyer

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Comedy

Rocky IV, The Karate Kid III, Halloween II... It's easy to name sequels that typify lazy, cynical moviemaking. However, a deft rehash beats a feeble original any day, as this month's comedies prove. The most ambitious—Eddie Murphy's directorial debut and a caustic Fay Weldon fable—are dead on arrival, while the latest editions of two proven properties crackle with life, albeit second-hand.

Written and directed by, as well as starring, Eddie Murphy, *Harlem Nights* has the trappings of a vanity project. In fact, it's slightly better than that. This '30s-era tale of nightlife revolves around a glitzy uptown club run by Sugar Ray (Richard Pryor) and his adopted son Quick (Murphy). Though the caper film boasts plenty of handsome period detail (hence an Oscar nomination for costume design), the plot is painfully sparse: When a white mob boss (Michael Lerner) and crooked cop (Danny Aiello) try to shut Ray's crew down, the underdogs outsmart the bullies and



Uptown Dudes: Richard Pryor (left) with *Harlem Nights* writer/director/producer/star Eddie Murphy.

make off with a sack of their loot.

Unfortunately, Murphy and Pryor can't overcome limp dialogue and slack pacing. For all its obscenities, Murphy's crafted a tame script; in place of the zingers you'd expect from two stand-up firebrands, he offers low-key, good-natured exchanges, none of 'em distinctive. To boot, the scenes drag on too long, generating all the urgency of a Sunday drive in the country.

Harlem Nights says plenty about the auteur. Murphy's obvious affection for Pryor adds a refreshing subtext. Likewise, his reliance on an ensemble, which spotlights lively supporting players like Aiello, Redd Foxx and Della Reese, shows a generous desire to create more than a star vehicle. (Unfortunately, he's



equally upfront about his misogyny, killing a deceitful lover after a romp in the sack.) Aspirations aside, Eddie Murphy doesn't yet have the skills to play every position.

Still, *Harlem Nights* seems like a triumph next to the disastrous *She-Devil*. Adapted from Fay Weldon's *The Lives and Loves of a She-Devil*, this saga of a scorned wife contains all the elements of a great story: sex, jealousy, deceit, revenge, money, you name it. Cable viewers were treated to a riveting British miniseries drawn from the novel a few years ago, but director Susan Seidelman has turned the same material into a lumpy mess.

An overweight mother of two, Ruth Patchett (Roseanne Barr) is a lousy housekeeper. When her accountant husband Bob (Ed Begley, Jr.) runs off with rich, beautiful romance novelist Mary Fisher (Meryl Streep), she decides to get even. After burning down the



family house, Ruth embarks on a fantastic odyssey, becoming a nurse at a retirement home and then heading a personnel agency for cast-offs like herself. Through a series of elaborate maneuvers, Ruth destroys Mary's career and causes Bob to be jailed for embezzlement. Vengeance is hers.

The tone of *She-Devil* fluctuates wildly, from somber to farcical and back

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REVIEWED

HARLEM NIGHTS

1989. Eddie Murphy, Redd Foxx, Danny Aiello; wr./dir. Murphy. 118m. (R) Hi cc no list price. LV \$24.95. B \$29.95. Paramount. V image: good.

SHE-DEVIL

1989. Meryl Streep, Roseanne Barr, Ed Begley, Jr.; dir. Susan Seidelman. 99m. (PG-13) Hi cc \$89.98. Orion. V image: good.

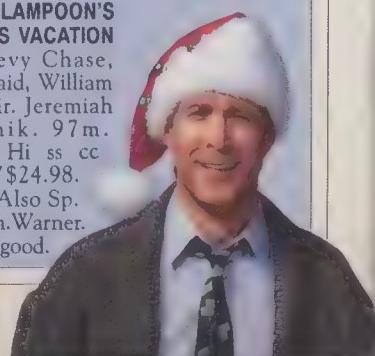
BACK TO THE FUTURE PART II

1989. Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd, Lea Thompson; dir. Robert Zemeckis.

108m. (PG) Hi ss cc no list price. LV \$34.98. MCA/Universal. V image: good.

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION

1989. Chevy Chase, Randy Quaid, William Hickey; dir. Jeremiah S. Chechik. 97m. (PG-13) Hi ss cc \$89.96. LV \$24.98. 8 \$29.98. Also Sp. sub.version. Warner. V image: good.



Drama

The dead know the darkness; at times the living do. And sometimes you can't tell one group of lost souls from another. This is the premise of *Carnival of Souls*, a sleeper B-movie that snored profoundly for 27 years. In its brief initial life it appeared on the underside of a few drive-in horror double bills. And though you can't see it from the backseat of a '62 Chevy anymore, take solace that good movies, at least, can be raised from the dead.

Proving once again that drag-racing is hazardous to the health, church organist Mary Henry and friends take a dive off a bridge. Incredibly, she alone escapes the submerged car. Wanting to leave her memories behind, she drives west, where a strange impulse draws her to a magnificent abandoned carnival palace by a lake. She's frightened by its pull, and by the unearthly white face that keeps peering out from the dark. The apparition drives her, for the moment, into the lecherous arms of a young neighbor (played to smarmy perfection by Sidney Berger). But her underwater compatriots are merely calling her back: They want her to join the dance of their carnival of souls.

The white face is that of director Herk Harvey, who, as he explains in a brief intro to this restored video edition of the film, was inspired to make his only feature when he sighted the abandoned carnival on the shore of the Great Salt Lake. The rest of the stylish black &



New Beginnings:
In Country's Bruce Willis and Emily Lloyd find relief at the Vietnam Memorial (above), while Candace Hilligoss prepares to enter the nether world in *Carnival of Souls* (right).



white film was shot in Kansas for a total of \$30,000 — small change even then. But it is in part the low-budget rough edges — continuity gaffes, "bad" acting, an effects track going its own way — that give this film its vitality and homemade charm. And it has an eeriness all its own.

Triumph of the Spirit shows how thoroughly the line separating life and death was tested in Auschwitz during the Holocaust. It tells the true story of Salamo Arouch, a champion boxer from Thessalonica who literally fought for his life in the concentration camp. Nobly portrayed by Willem Dafoe — his face steeled by grief — Arouch's triumph involves not only the will to live, but to live as a human. His ultimately transcendent love for Allegra (Wendy Gazzelle) and for the father he's unable to save (Robert Loggia) constitutes both his sustenance and his pain.

This grim film is appropriately un-

embroidered, controlled but not shy. What the movie tells of this horrendous epoch is not new, either psychologically or historically. But in its details, through little ironies and complex relationships (as with the gypsy prisoner/guard played by Edward James Olmos), it is rooted in the personal. It's one of the six million individual stories that comprised a tragedy.

But the resonances of that tragedy are still heard. Costa-Gavras, who specializes in High Drama of Great Import (*Z* and *Missing*), has chosen such a subject for *Music Box*: the trial of an alleged Hungarian SS trooper now living quietly in Chicago. His lawyer daughter (Jessica Lange) knows nothing of his past and refuses to believe the truth, even when the evidence stacks cruelly against her father. The final revelation, which is never really in doubt, is saved from mawkishness mainly by Lange's performance. In

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REVIEWED

CARNIVAL OF SOULS

1962. B&W. Candace Hilligoss; dir. Herk Harvey. 84m. (PG) Hi \$59.98. VidAmerica. V image: good.

TRIUMPH OF THE SPIRIT

1989. Willem Dafoe, Edward James Olmos; dir. Robert M. Young. 120m. (R) Hi ss cc \$89.95. RCA/Columbia. V image: excel.

MUSIC BOX

1989. Jessica Lange, Frederic Forrest; dir. Costa-Gavras. 126m. (PG-13) Hi \$89.95. IVE. V image: good.

IN COUNTRY

1989. Bruce Willis, Emily Lloyd; dir. Norman Jewison. 116m. (R) Hi ss cc \$89.95. LV \$24.98. 8 \$29.98. Also Sp. sub. version. Warner. V image: excel.

Laserdiscs

Just as the rise of the compact audio disc has led to the restoration and reissue of countless works of music, the growing acceptance of the video laserdisc continues to inspire the re-release of all-time great films in their original theatrical forms. CBS/Fox's recent reissue of the 1970 epic war biography *Patton* is just one glowing example. Letterboxed at an aspect ratio of about 2.1:1 to preserve the film's original "Dimension 150" 70mm scope—and transferred through an apparently flawless digital master—*Patton* becomes a tribute to mainstream Hollywood filmmaking at its most inventive.

Directed by Franklin J. Schaffner (*Planet of the Apes*, *Papillon*) from a script by Francis Ford Coppola and Edmund North, *Patton* is a rare commodity among war pictures: It neither wraps itself in the flag nor preaches the immorality of the fight. That the film was made at the height of Vietnam-era turmoil makes its objectivity seem all the more striking. We are left with a complex and involving character study—George C. Scott, who won an Academy award for his performance, is perfect as the obsessed general—and the epic

Stiff Upper Lip:
George C. Scott as the stoic general in the wide-screen war epic, *Patton*.



sweep of the story. Four authentic newsreels included at the end of this two-disc set offer a rare glimpse of the real-life *Patton*.

Compared to *Patton*'s stellar re-release, Paramount's new laserdisc versions of Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* and *The Godfather Part II* seem particularly disappointing. Their new digital soundtracks provide only a marginal improvement over the analog originals, and the transfers are soft and indistinct.

Even the sequel's new subtitles, generated for its many Italian-language scenes, are oddly inadequate—the titles are presented in the traditional white in-



National Pastime: Gwen Verdon tries to take Tab Hunter's mind off baseball in *Damn Yankees*.

stead of the easier-to-read yellow subtitles now common on tape and disc. And Paramount's decision not to include chapter stops is completely inexplicable, especially in light of the films' combined running time of more than six hours.

Even so, it's hard to keep a great film

down, and Coppola's two early-'70s masterpieces rise above their lackluster presentations. Brilliant performances by Al Pacino, Marlon Brando, Robert Duvall and others easily stand the test of time. Coppola's command of dramatic structure was never more apparent, especially in the way he weaves together separate stories spanning 60 years in *Part II*. Make no mistake—these discs are well worth their price. But definitive video versions of the *Godfather* films have yet to be produced.

It should probably come as no surprise that the 1958 film musical *Damn Yankees* made a smooth transition from Broadway to the silver screen—ten of the play's 11 principal actors came along for the ride, in addition to scriptwriter and co-director (with Stanley Donen) George Abbott. This lively variation on the Faust legend—a fan of the lowly Washington Senators baseball club sells his soul to become the team's much-needed long-ball hitter—boasts a bumper crop of catchy songs plus a series of inspired production numbers by legendary choreographer Bob Fosse, who makes a rare onscreen appearance here in a duet with Gwen Verdon.

The film's lack of big-name stars—Tab Hunter, Jean Stapleton and Ray Walston (*My Favorite Martian*) are its most familiar faces—only adds to its ap-

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REVIEWED

PATTON

1970. George C. Scott, Karl Malden; dir. Franklin Schaffner. 169m. dig. let. ss 4 sides. CLV \$69.98. CBS/Fox.

THE GODFATHER

1972. Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, Robert Duvall, James Caan; co-wr./dir. Francis Ford Coppola. 171m. dig. 4 sides. CLV \$44.95. Paramount.

THE GODFATHER PART II

1974. Al Pacino, Robert DeNiro, Robert Duvall; co-wr./dir. Francis Ford Coppola. 200m. dig. 4 sides. CLV \$44.95. Paramount.

DAMN YANKEES

1958. Tab Hunter, Ray Walston, Gwen Verdon; dir. George Abbott, Stanley Donen. 111m. dig. cc 2 sides. CLV \$24.98. Warner.

SMITHSONIAN LASERDISC COLLECTION: DINOSAURS

1989. Nar. James Whitmore; wr./dir. Louis Barbash. 60m. dig. cc 2 sides. CAV \$29.95. Lumivision.



Classics

Although the past decade has brought the video release of many of the best and most widely known movies from Hollywood's banner years, hundreds of significant pictures made in the '30s, '40s and '50s remain in studio vaults, only to be released on tape and disc in sporadic dribs. This month's crop of classic films, however, includes several works of more than casual interest.

Heaven Can Wait (1943) boasts production credits which fire one's expectations: It was produced and directed by the great Ernst Lubitsch (*Trouble in Paradise*, *Design for Living*), scripted by Samson Raphaelson (*The Jazz Singer*, as well as many of Lubitsch's most sophisticated comedies) and scored by nine-time Academy Award winner Alfred Newman. The supporting roles are played by familiar stalwarts and endearing character actors: Louis Calhern, Signe Hasso, Marjorie Main, Charles Coburn.

But *Heaven Can Wait* embodies just about all the potential liabilities of movies churned out by the old Hollywood studio system. Lubitsch's direction is lifeless and reveals none of his famed "touch." (His most scintillating American films were all produced at Para-



Newman, who scored around 200 films, just goes through the motions here. The starring roles were filled arbitrarily by two of Fox's prime contract performers — Don Ameche and Gene Tierney — both of whom are egregiously miscast.

The story involves a wayward bon vivant named Henry van Cleve (Ameche) who comes before Satan after his life has ended. In flashback, he recounts his many misdemeanors. He suspects he should be damned, but judgment on the matter is withheld. By the end of this clichéd and soporific "comedy," the viewer cares little either way.

Cover Girl (1944) is a fairly typical '40s musical, likely to have the greatest appeal for aficionados of the genre, Rita Hayworth fans and clothes designers. This melodrama of struggling stagefolk features superb music by Jerome Kern and Ira Gershwin, plus exuberant dancing by Hayworth and Gene Kelly (who, in an unusually explosive number, dances a duet with a superimposed image of himself).

Hayworth appears in full, luscious bloom — not yet as stunningly dangerous as in subsequent films such as *Gilda* and *The Lady from Shanghai*, but already the

favored pin-up of American GIs. The film is also a virtual catalogue of period chic in women's fashions. But in an unfortunate effort to bolster their work, the producers saddled it with a stultifying montage picturing real cover girls parading across the screen before pro-

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Horsin' Around: Johnny Clay (Sterling Hayden) masterminds a racetrack heist in *The Killing*.

mount, which had a penchant for this type of movie, but *Heaven* was made after his shift to Fox, a studio better geared to producing vehicles for Sonja Henie and Betty Grable.) Raphaelson's script is tired and relatively witless, and



Golden Oldies:
Rita Hayworth (left) makes her mark as a *Cover Girl*, while Don Ameche and Gene Tierney (above) find that *Heaven Can Wait*.

REVIEWED

HEAVEN CAN WAIT

1943. Gene Tierney, Don Ameche; dir. Ernst Lubitsch. (NR) 112m. Hi \$39.98. LV \$39.98. CBS/Fox. V image: good.

COVER GIRL

1944. Rita Hayworth, Gene Kelly, Phil Silvers, Eve Arden; dir. Charles Vidor. 107m. (NR) Hi \$19.95. RCA/Columbia. V image: good.

DESK SET

1957. Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, Joan Blondell; dir. Walter Lang. (NR) 103m. Hi \$39.98. LV let. \$59.98. CBS/Fox. V image: good.

THE KILLING

1956. B&W. Sterling Hayden, Coleen Gray; wr. Stanley Kubrick and Jim Thompson; dir. Kubrick. 95m. (NR) Hi \$19.95. MGM/UA. V image: good.

BY JON SILBERG

Foreign Films



When Worlds Collide:
Inspector Mishima and
Ryoko Itakura stalk
their suspects in *A
Taxing Woman's Return*
(left), while Sachiko
and Tsurako mourn the
loss of simpler times in
The Makioka Sisters
(below).

Japanese director Juzo Itami reprises the internationally popular character of Ryoko Itakura, the toughest tax collector in Japan, in the very entertaining *A Taxing Woman's Return*. The sequel continues *A Taxing Woman's* cynical thesis that in today's industrial world, extortion, fraud and racketeering are ubiquitous and the government's only hope is to catch criminals for tax evasion.

Ryoko, out of place in an office filled with scores of male colleagues, must go the extra mile to find unreported income. She takes on a land developer who uses extortion as a standard business practice, an evangelist whose tax-exempt cult provides a haven for the spoils of corruption and a gang of low-lives hiding behind a holding company.

The cat and mouse games are fascinating, with the bad guys often more clever than the good, and Itami keeps you wondering who will outsmart whom. Nobuko Miyamoto, Itami's real-life wife, has been a memorable presence in all of Itami's films. As the Taxing Woman, she often seems silly and overwrought risking life and limb for the tax department,



but we always root for her. *A Taxing Woman's Return* is witty and clever—and it's certainly the most action-packed movie ever made about a tax inspector.

Director Itami is something of a Renaissance man—he is also known in Japan as an essayist, a TV personality and an actor. He gives a wonderful acting performance in *The Makioka Sisters*, a Japanese film whose critical acclaim a few years back failed to win it the distribution it deserved in the U.S. This intensely evocative saga of a Japanese family and its disappearing lifestyle is compelling for its entire 140 minutes.

Based on the novel by Junichiro Tanizaki, *The Makioka Sisters* is the story of the five daughters of a deceased Osaka merchant and their day-to-day existence at the dawn of the Second World War. Their way of life, the prestige they enjoy and the traditions they observe will soon be obliterated by a war that is



Faustian Fable:
Ignacio Lopez Tarso
plays a woodsman who
makes a deal with
Death in *Macario*.

barely acknowledged by these residents of peaceful Osaka.

Invasions of China are of little concern to the eldest daughter, Tsuruko, whose main interests, as the matriarch of the family, are how her sisters will marry, to whom and in what order. She tries to preserve the Makioka's standing and hold the family together despite dissension among the sisters. And when she finds that her husband's business might necessitate a move to the industrializing Tokyo, where the Makioka's name means nothing, she must face the fact that old ways are coming to an end.

The Makioka Sisters transports the viewer to another world—the performances are real and the cinematography is elegant even on a small TV screen. But what is most fascinating about it isn't how exotic the story is, but how universal.

Chocolat is another slow and deliberate portrayal of a disappearing culture. During a trip through Cameroon a young woman named France (Mireille Perrier) reminisces about her childhood in French West Africa. Like the character, the film's director, Claire Denis, grew up in Cameroon when it was a French colony and black men (called "boys") waited on whites obediently. Since the story is told from the point of view of a young girl, Denis concentrates on physical detail without providing the moral perspective the viewer might expect.

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REVIEWED

A TAXING WOMAN'S RETURN

1988. Nuboku Miyamoto, Rentaro Mikuni; dir. Juzo Itami. 127m. Hi sub. \$79.95. New Yorker. V image: good.

THE MAKIOKA SISTERS

1983. Keiko Kishi, Yoshiko Sakuma; dir. Kon Ichikawa. 140m. Hi sub \$59.95. R/S8 Presents. V image: good.

CHOCOLAT

Mireille Perrier, Emmet Judson Williamson; dir. Claire Denis. 105m. (PG-13) Hi sub. \$79.98. Orion. V image: good.

MACARIO

1960. B&W. Ignacio Lopez Tarso, Pina Pellicer; dir. Roberto Gavaldon. 91m. Hi sub. \$59.95. Connoisseur. V image: excel.

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The making of quality programs

BY MARIANNE MEYER

It's easier to criticize children's programming than to create it. A new book entitled *Ramona: Behind the Scenes of a Television Show* (Morrow Junior Books, \$13.95), as well as a visit to the set of Nickelodeon's *Eureka's Castle* (more about which later) reveal the long work and hard decisions that go into making a quality children's show. Given the massive effort required to create programming, one can only wonder how any shows at all get made, let alone very good ones.

Behind the Scenes involves the creation of *Forever Ramona*, a limited-run TV series adapted from Beverly Cleary's best-selling books. (The ten episodes were repackaged late last year by Warner Home Video.) Written in an easy-going, conversational style by Elaine Scott (with photos by Margaret Miller), the book is aimed at the same eight-to-12 age group targeted by the original *Ramona* books. However, its wealth of detail and layman's explanations of TV production make it an informative read for parents as well.

The material proceeds logically, from the series' conception to what's finally seen and heard on the small screen. Subjects covered include the writers' adaptation efforts, casting, directing and mounting of the final production. The details are fascinating: More than 150 actresses were auditioned to find the little girl who would eventually become the very image of Ramona in the minds of future readers. Even the girl's stuffed toy, Ella Funt, had to be "cast" from baskets full of stuffed animals.

You'll learn the differences between "dailies" and "rushes," commercial and public television, pre- and post-produc-

Kidvid



Slight of Hand: Magellan the baby dragon is one of several puppet "stars" featured on *Eureka's Castle*.

tion, taping and filming, gaffers and grips. Why would a loose tooth cause the continuity department to tremble? What does a location manager or, for that matter, a producer actually do? Why does it take 60 people and nearly \$3 million to make five hours of quality viewing?

The *Ramona* video series was a delight, a refreshing look at what goes on in an 8-year-old girl's mind as she deals with siblings, parents, school and growing up. *Behind the Scenes* is a joy, too, and a bit of a revelation. America's children, it says, watch a combined total of 90 billion hours of television per year.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

In its ten-year history, cable channel Nickelodeon has created a variety of original shows, most with high standards. Preschoolers to young teens

(particularly the eight-to-12 group) are Nick's target audience, but even adults (I confess to it) have been drawn in by some of its innovative programming ideas and goofy promotions.

Whether or not you consider the gameshow *Super Slappy Double Dare* "every kid's fecal fantasy" (as one pundit put it), it's a direct hit with its audience and unconventional fun. From the problem solving tone of *Kids Court* to the Sunday morning actionfest, *Total Panic*, Nickelodeon has tried to do big things with relatively small budgets.

Now the channel is stretching its dollars (and its audience reach) by turning some of its hit series into videos. Three of Nick's most popular shows are now available on cassette. The bad-to-gross comedy of *You Can't Do That on Television* is pulled together in a high-continued on page 86

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

A Bill of Divorcement

1932. B&W. John Barrymore, Katharine Hepburn, Billie Burke; dir. George Cukor. Hepburn debuted in this creaky melodrama about a father's return from a mental hospital. See it for still-potent star electricity. 70m. cc \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

Born to Dance

1936. B&W. Eleanor Powell, James Stewart, Una Merkel, Buddy Ebsen; dir. Roy del Ruth. Sailor meets girl, much singing and hoofing ensues. Overflowing with great Cole Porter tunes. 102m. \$19.95. MGM/UA.

The Enemy Below

1957. Robert Mitchum, Curt Jurgens, Theodore Bikel, David Hedison; dir. Dick Powell. Solid WW II submarine actioner contrasting American and German commanders. Purists take note: Wide-screen special effects won an Oscar, but they're panned and scanned here. 98m. \$19.98. CBS/Fox.

Guadalcanal Diary

1943. B&W. Preston Foster, William Bendix, Lloyd Nolan, Anthony Quinn; dir. Lewis Seiler. Marines invade Pacific's Solomon Islands. Expertly staged rouser. 93m. \$19.98. CBS/Fox.

Meet Me in St. Louis

1944. Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien, Leon Ames, Mary Astor, Marjorie Main; dir. Vincente Minnelli. Lavishly crafted musical chronicles year in the life of Missouri family, ca. 1900. New edition features restored color and sound plus still-photo re-creation of cut production number. 114m. cc \$19.95 (RE). MGM/UA.



Midwestern Magic: Judy Garland (center) croons her way through the newly restored *Meet Me in St. Louis*.

My Left Foot

1989. Daniel Day-Lewis, Ray McAnally, Brenda Fricker; wr. Shane Connaughton, Jim Sheridan; dir. Sheridan. Day-Lewis's riveting portrait of crippled Irish painter-author Christy Brown, with Fricker equally fine as Brown's workhorse mother. A must. 103m. (R) \$89.99. HBO.

Portrait of Jennie

1948. B&W. Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten; dir. William Dieterle. Painter Cotten falls in love with ghostly Jones in this elegant, lushly scored romantic fantasy that's as preposterous as it is compelling. 86m. cc \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

Posse

1975. Kirk Douglas, Bruce Dern, Bo Hopkins, James Stacy; dir. Douglas. Turn-of-the-century Texas marshal makes tough stance against bandits the focus of his campaign for U.S. Senate seat. Admirably spare, thoughtful western. 94m. (PG) \$14.95. Paramount.

The Purple Heart

1944. B&W. Dana Andrews, Richard Conte, Farley Granger; dir. Lewis Milestone. Cast excellent in this unrelentingly grim drama of eight U.S. pilots shot down during Tokyo bombing raid and put on trial by Japanese. 98m. \$19.98. CBS/Fox.

Rebecca

1940. B&W. Laurence Olivier, Joan Fontaine, George Sanders, Judith Anderson; pr. David O. Selznick; dir. Alfred Hitchcock. When a wealthy Cornish widower remarries, his departed wife's lingering presence overwhelms her frowsy successor. Deluxe disc edition of the soap-suspense classic includes 2AP commentary, production correspondence between Hitchcock and Selznick, screen tests with Fontaine, Vivien Leigh, Loretta Young. 130m. (plus untimed material) CAV dig. 6 sides \$124.95. CLV edition (no supplements) 3 sides \$69.95. Criterion.

Red River

1948. B&W. John Wayne, Montgomery Clift, Walter Brennan, Joanne Dru; dir. Howard Hawks. At last, the full-length cut

Labels For Less



Roddy McDowall in the Apes saga

In keeping with their long record of promoting sales over rentals, **Paramount** has shot down *Top Gun*'s list price to a mere \$14.95 — still duplicated in all its standard-speed, Dolby surround glory.

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Newly packaged and painstakingly remastered for surround sound, the complete five-picture *Planet of the Apes* saga is available from **CBS/Fox** at \$19.98 per title. Mail in proofs of purchase for the entire set (plus \$1.75) and you'll get a commemorative poster.

Bruce Lee fans should get a kick out of **CBS/Fox**'s reissue of five Lee titles, down from \$59.98 to \$19.98 each: *Fists of Fury*, *Chinese Connection*, *Return of the Dragon*, *Game of Death* and the documentary *Bruce Lee, the Legend*. —SD

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of Hawks' epic western. Beware still-circulating copies of 125m. version (if Brennan gives voice-over narration, you've got the wrong tape). 134m. cc \$19.95. MGM/UA.

Rock & Read

1990. Live action/anim. Wr./dir. Tamar Simon Hoffs. Kiddie music videos designed to encourage literacy. 29m. St \$14.95. MCA.

Sesame Songs Home Videos

1990. Whimsical ditties from Public TV program. 2 cas.: *Monster Hits!*, *Sing Yourself Silly!* (with James Taylor). 30m. ea. cc \$14.95 ea. Random.

Since You Went Away

1944. B&W. Claudette Colbert, Joseph Cotten, Jennifer Jones, Shirley Temple, Agnes Moorehead, Guy Madison; wr./pr. David O. Selznick; dir. John Cromwell. Midwestern family suffers through WW II tragedies. Pretentious, irresistible four-hankie weeper. 180m. (2 cas.) cc \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

Sink the Bismarck!

1960. Kenneth More, Dana Wynter, Carl Mohner; dir. Lewis Gilbert. British naval commander is assigned to track and destroy Nazi Germany's most formidable battleship. 97m. \$19.98. CBS/Fox.

3 Godfathers

1948. John Wayne, Pedro Armendariz, Ward Bond, Harry Carey, Jr., Mildred Natwick; dir. John Ford. Outlaws on the run take charge of foundling infant. Heartfelt western parable. 103m. \$19.95. MGM/UA.

Topaze

1933. B&W. John Barrymore, Myrna Loy, Albert Conti; dir. Harry d'Abbadie d'Arrast. Charming comedy features Barrymore as French schoolmaster who turns tables on the business sharpies trying to exploit his ideas. 78m. cc \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

Two Girls and a Sailor

1944. June Allyson, Gloria de Haven, Van Johnson, Jimmy Durante, Lena Horne, Gracie Allen; dir. Richard Thorpe. Breezy musical revue about singing sisters who open wartime canteen. Jimmy and Gracie steal it. 125m. \$19.95. MGM/UA.

The War Years

1942-45. B&W. Nar. Gen. George C. Marshall; dir. Frank Capra. Propagandistic WW II "documentaries," hosted by Frank

PROGRAM LEGEND

DATE

Varies according to type of program.

Films: original theatrical release.

Made-for-broadcast: first telecast.

Made-for-video: first release in any format.

Compilations: production of collected work.

FORMAT

All tape programs are available in Beta and VHS unless noted.

B: Beta cassette

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CAV format.

AUDIO

All available info is provided. Tapes generally have Hi-fi tracks; discs are CX encoded.

St: stereo

ss: Dolby surround stereo

cc: closed-captioned

Capra, Jr. Eight cas.: *Know Your Ally*—*Britain, Tunisian Victory Parts I, II, Negro Soldier, Attack! The Battle for New Britain, Know Your Enemy—Japan, Here Is Germany, Two Down—One To Go.* Approx. 50m. ea. \$19.95 ea.; 8-vol. set \$149.95. V only. RCA/Columbia.

DRAMA

Intimate Power

1989. F. Murray Abraham, Amber O'Shea; dir. Jack Smight. French girl sold to harem leads revolt against barbaric Sultan. 104m. (R) ss cc V only. \$89.99. HBO.

The Little Thief

1989. Charlotte Gainsburg, Simone de la Brosse; dir. Claude Miller. French film based on a Francois Truffaut story outline: Young woman battles compulsion to steal. 108m. (PG-13) ss sub. V only. \$89.99. HBO.

Loulou

1980. Isabelle Huppert, Gerard Depardieu, Guy Marchand; dir. Maurice Pialat. Woman leaves staid husband for working-class stud. 110m. sub. \$79.95. New Yorker.

Magdalene

1988. Nastassja Kinski, David Warner, Franco Nero, Anthony Quayle; wr./dir. Monica Teuber. Priest intercedes when powerful baron seeks revenge against prostitute who spurned him. 89m. (PG) ss B \$29.95 V no retail price. Prism.

Max and Helen

1990. Treat Williams, Alice Krige, Martin Landau. Concentration camp escapee searches for two decades for fiancee he left behind. 94m. St cc \$79.98. Turner.

Portrait of Teresa

1979. Daisy Granados, Adolfo Llaurado; dir. Pastor Vega. Cuban character study about housewife who becomes involved in politics despite husband's objections. 115m. sub. \$69.95. New Yorker.

Reunion In France

1942. B&W. Joan Crawford, John Wayne, Philip Dorn, Reginald Owen, John Carradine; dir. Jules Dassin. As Nazis march on Paris, selfish socialite Crawford is moved to help downed pilot Wayne escape capture. 100m. \$19.95. MGM/UA.

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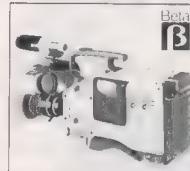
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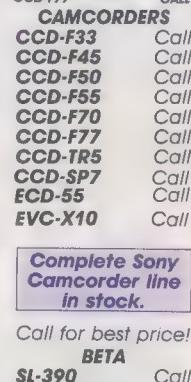
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Spymaker: The Secret Life of Ian Fleming
1990. Jason Connery, Kristin Scott Thomas, Joss Ackland, David Warner; dir. Ferdinand Fairfax. Made-for-cable bio of James Bond author. 96m. St \$79.98. Turner.

ACTION**The Bear**

1989. Dir. Jean-Jacques Annaud. Wounded grizzly takes orphaned cub in tow. 92m. (PG) ss cc \$89.95. RCA/Columbia.

Bonanza

1964-65. Lorne Greene, Michael Landon, Dan Blocker, Pernell Roberts. Episodes of western TV series: *The Pure Truth*, *Bullet for a Bride*, *The Cheating Game*, *The Trap*. Dig those brightly hued outfits, designed to show off color TVs. 50m. ea. \$14.98 ea.; available as boxed set. Republic.

Diamond Run

1988. William Bell Sullivan, Ava Lazar, David Thornton; wr./dir. Robert Chappell. Call girl witnesses murder, becomes killers' next target. 89m. (R) ss \$79.95. M.C.E.G./Virgin.

Jubilee Trail

1954. Forrest Tucker, Vera Ralston, Joan Leslie; dir. Joseph Kane. On journey westward, pioneer newlyweds meet husband's former lover and illegitimate son. 103m. V only. \$14.95. Republic.

Kill Me Again

1989. Val Kilmer, Joanne Whalley-Kilmer, Michael Madsen; co-wr., dir. John Dahl. Mobster's ex-girlfriend hires detective to fake her death. 96m. (R) ss cc \$89.95. MGM/UA.

Legend of the Lost

1957. John Wayne, Sophia Loren, Rossano Brazzi; dir. Henry Hathaway. Search for buried Sahara treasure. 109m. \$19.95. MGM/UA.

Old Gringo

1989. Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, Jimmy Smits; dir. Luis Puenzo. Muddled romantic epic set against Mexican Revolution. 119m. (R) ss cc \$89.95. RCA/Columbia.

Peter Gunn

Ca. 1960. B&W. Craig Stevens, Lola Albright, Herschel Bernardi; pr. Blake Edwards. Three more vols. of the private-eye TV series, two episodes per cas.; shows include *Lynn's Blues* (with Gavin MacLeod), *The Comic*, *The Torch* (all dir. Edwards). 55m. ea. V only. \$19.95 ea. Rhino.

Private War

1990. Martin Hewitt, Joe Dallesandro, Kimberly Beck; co-wr./dir. Frank DePalma. Special-forces recruit balks at drill instructor's brutal tactics. 95m. (R) ss \$89.98. Republic.

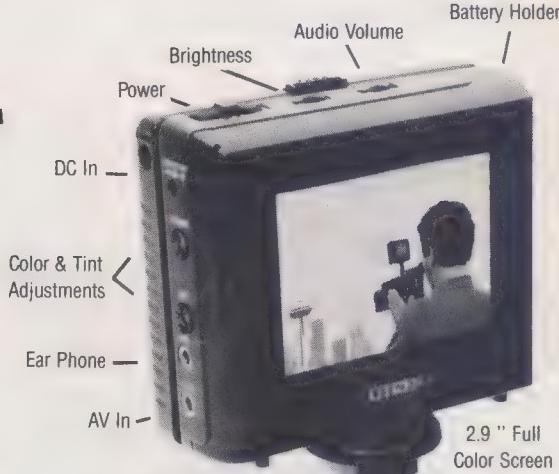
Ramrod

1947. B&W. Joel McCrea, Veronica Lake, Preston Foster, Charles Ruggles, Donald Crisp, Lloyd Bridges; dir. Andre de Toth. Father-daughter dispute over adjacent cattle ranches leads to a stampede and bloodshed. 94m. V only. \$14.95. Republic. ▶

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DIRECTORY

Slaughter

1972. Jim Brown, Stella Stevens, Rip Torn, Marlene Clark, Don Gordon; dir. Jack Starrett. Violent exploitation flick: Ex-Green Beret targets syndicate that ordered his parents' death. 92m. (R) \$59.98. CBS/Fox.

Slaughter's Big Ripoff

1973. Jim Brown, Brock Peters, Ed McMahon, Gloria Hendry; dir. Gordon Douglas. McMahon plays syndicate chief out to kill Brown. 92m. (R) \$59.98. CBS/Fox.

Thunder Pass

1954. B&W. Dane Clark, Andy Devine, Dorothy Patrick, John Carradine, Raymond Burr; dir. Frank McDonald. Cavalry commander rallies settlers attacked by Indians. 76m. V only. \$14.95. Republic.

Treasure Island

1989. Charlton Heston, Oliver Reed, Christian Bale, Christopher Lee; dir. Fraser C. Heston. Heston plays Long John Silver in this spirited cable-TV adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's adventure classic. 131m. St cc \$79.98. Turner.

War Party

1989. Kevin Dillon, Billy Wirth; dir. Franc Roddam. Re-enactment of Indian massacre ends in murder. 99m. (R) ss cc V only. \$89.99. HBO.

The Wings of Eagles

1957. John Wayne, Dan Dailey, Maureen O'Hara, Ward Bond; dir. John Ford. Life story of Navy pilot Frank "Spig" Wead, friend of Ford's who became Hollywood screenwriter after disabling accident. 107m. \$19.95. MGM/UA.

VIDEODISCS

The Alamo

1960. John Wayne, Richard Widmark. Western. 161m. (orig. release 199m.) St cc let. dig. 3 sides. \$39.95. MGM/UA.

Billy Rose's Jumbo

1962. Doris Day, Jimmy Durante. Musical. 125m. (G) St let. dig. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

Brigadoon

1954. Gene Kelly, Cyd Charisse. Musical. 108m. (G) St dig. let. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

A Date With Judy

1948. Jane Powell, Elizabeth Taylor, Carmen Miranda. Musical. 113m. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

Diplomaniacs

1933. B&W. Bert Wheeler, Robert Woolsey. Comedy. 63m. dig. \$39.95. Image.

Harlem Nights

1989. Eddie Murphy, Richard Pryor. Come-

dy. 118m. (R) ss cc dig. \$24.95. Also let. version. Paramount.

Mighty Joe Young

1949. B&W/tinted. Terry Moore, Ben Johnson. Action. 94m. dig. \$39.95. Image.

The Misfits

1961. B&W. Clark Gable, Marilyn Monroe. Drama. 124m. St 3 sides. \$39.95. MGM/Columbia.

The More the Merrier

1943. B&W. Jean Arthur, Joel McCrea. Comedy. 104m. dig. \$34.95. RCA/Columbia.

Nothing Sacred

1937. Carole Lombard, Fredric March. Comedy. 75m. dig. \$29.95. Image.

Picnic

1955. William Holden, Kim Novak. Drama. 115m. dig. let. \$34.95. RCA/Columbia.

Red River

See Highlights. 134m. 3 sides. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

Son of Kong

1933. B&W. Robert Armstrong, Helen Mack. Action. 70m. dig. \$39.95. Image.

The Unsinkable Molly Brown

1964. Debbie Reynolds, Harve Presnell. Musical. 128m. (G) St dig. let. 3 sides. \$39.95. MGM/UA.

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DIRECTORY

Slaughter

1972. Jim Brown, Stella Stevens, Rip Torn, Marlene Clark, Don Gordon; dir. Jack Starrett. Violent exploitation flick: Ex-Green Beret targets syndicate that ordered his parents' death. 92m. (R) \$59.98. CBS/Fox.

Slaughter's Big Ripoff

1973. Jim Brown, Brock Peters, Ed McMahon, Gloria Hendry; dir. Gordon Douglas. McMahon plays syndicate chief out to kill Brown. 92m. (R) \$59.98. CBS/Fox.

Thunder Pass

1954. B&W. Dane Clark, Andy Devine, Dorothy Patrick, John Carradine, Raymond Burr; dir. Frank McDonald. Cavalry commander rallies settlers attacked by Indians. 76m. V only. \$14.95. Republic.

Treasure Island

1989. Charlton Heston, Oliver Reed, Christian Bale, Christopher Lee; dir. Fraser C. Heston. Heston plays Long John Silver in this spirited cable-TV adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's adventure classic. 131m. St cc \$79.98. Turner.

War Party

1989. Kevin Dillon, Billy Wirth; dir. Franc Roddam. Re-enactment of Indian massacre ends in murder. 99m. (R) ss cc V only.

The Wings of Eagles

1957. John Wayne, Dan Dailey, Maureen O'Hara, Ward Bond; dir. John Ford. Life story of Navy pilot Frank "Spig" Wead, friend of Ford's who became Hollywood screenwriter after disabling accident. 107m. \$19.95. MGM/UA.

VIDEODISCS

The Alamo

1960. John Wayne, Richard Widmark. Western. 161m. (orig. release 199m.) St cc let. dig. 3 sides. \$39.95. MGM/UA.

Billy Rose's Jumbo

1962. Doris Day, Jimmy Durante. Musical. 125m. (G) St let. dig. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

Brigadoon

1954. Gene Kelly, Cyd Charisse. Musical. 108m. (G) St dig. let. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

A Date With Judy

1948. Jane Powell, Elizabeth Taylor, Carmen Miranda. Musical. 113m. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

Diplomaniacs

1933. B&W. Bert Wheeler, Robert Woolsey. Comedy. 63m. dig. \$39.95. Image.

Harlem Nights

dy. 118m. (R) ss cc dig. \$24.95. Also let. version. Paramount.

Mighty Joe Young

1949. B&W/tinted. Terry Moore, Ben Johnson. Action. 94m. dig. \$39.95. Image.

The Misfits

1961. B&W. Clark Gable, Marilyn Monroe. Drama. 124m. St 3 sides. \$39.95. MGM/UA.

The More the Merrier

1943. B&W. Jean Arthur, Joel McCrea. Comedy. 104m. dig. \$34.95. RCA/Columbia.

Nothing Sacred

1937. Carole Lombard, Fredric March. Comedy. 75m. dig. \$29.95. Image.

Picnic

1955. William Holden, Kim Novak. Drama. 115m. dig. let. \$34.95. RCA/Columbia.

Red River

See *Highlights*. 134m. 3 sides. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

Son of Kong

1933. B&W. Robert Armstrong, Helen Mack. Action. 70m. dig. \$39.95. Image.

The Unsinkable Molly Brown

1964. Debbie Reynolds, Harve Presnell. Musical. 128m. (G) St dig. let. 3 sides.

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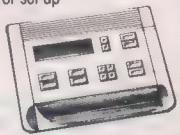
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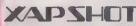
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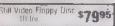
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DRAMA

continued from page 63

fact, the actress has to struggle against the incoming tide of the film's "big story" and overly emphatic direction. Lange richly deserved the Oscar nomination she received for her efforts.

The war that truly won't die, especially on the big screen, is taken up anew in *In Country*. Based on Bobbie Ann Mason's novel, it concerns teenager Samantha (Emily Lloyd), her vet uncle Emmett (Bruce Willis) and the young father she never knew. They're from Hopewell, Kentucky, where not much happens except the basic business of life. The only characters who still hold out hope for the future were not around to witness the unfolding horror in Vietnam, or its subsequent stateside travesty. For those who fought "in country," the wounds remain physical and psychic, and no one wants to understand.

Except Sam. Her curious prodding and lively belligerence catalyze Emmett, for the first time, to lay to rest the wartime memories that have made him an outsider. Unfortunately, Willis does not

have what it takes to suggest the deep torment required by the role of Emmett. He seems half asleep, not half crazy. Lloyd, on the other hand, is convincing as a young woman with more than the usual share of adolescent concerns. The declamatory script is a problem in all but the final scene, in which Washington's Vietnam Memorial provides the cathartic backdrop for a release from the past.

The bigger problem, common when Hollywood confronts subtleties with sledgehammers, is the lost potential for a memorable film. It can't be done by trying this hard. ■

LASERDISCS

continued from page 64

peak, as the directors strive to find more imaginative ways to keep audiences entranced. Preserved in all its technicolor glory, *Damn Yankees* is simply a lot of fun. And with its sharp, detailed transfer and generous \$24.98 price tag, this disc constitutes ideal summertime entertainment.

Just one of six current titles in the

impressive new "Smithsonian Laserdisc Collection," *Dinosaurs* is a fascinating survey of everybody's favorite prehistoric marvels. Narrated by James Whitmore, this hour-long documentary takes us from an archaeological dig in Texas to the Smithsonian's off-limits "type room," where the fossils originally used to identify and name individual species are kept. Leading paleontologists explore a variety of controversial topics and join the ongoing debate over the source of the dinosaurs' extinction. Other Smithsonian titles, all in the CAV format, include *The Flying Machines, Gems and Minerals, Insects, The National Zoo and First Ladies*. ■

CLASSICS

continued from page 65

cess shots of real magazine covers.

The messages delivered by *Cover Girl* are predictably simplistic and reassuring: "You gotta work for whatcha get," life in Brooklyn is more vital than that on Park Avenue, true love brings greater satisfaction than fame and for-

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tune. But this is hardly more banal than what usually passes for story content in Hollywood musicals. *Cover Girl* has good tunes, lyrics and dancing, plus a resplendent Rita and the comic brashness of Eve Arden and Phil Silvers — and that's entertainment.

Desk Set (1957) is among the most delightful of the nine films Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy made together. Kate plays a research librarian for a broadcast network, while Tracy is an efficiency engineer who invades her domain. Hepburn fears Tracy is set on replacing the library's staff with a monstrous computer. Mutual distrust and attraction provide a foundation for lively screwball comedy. But the film's greatest asset is Hepburn — brainy yet vulnerable, proud yet ardent, and radiant as ever.

There is, however, a problem with the video transfer of this work. *Desk Set* was shot in CinemaScope, and in several key sequences it develops its drama through action along the full width of the screen. Scanning for video has left participating figures in group scenes cut off, or cut out entirely. It's annoying, but it doesn't cripple the film.

On a number of counts, *The Killing* (1956) is a most welcome release. This tale of an ingeniously planned racetrack heist was director Stanley Kubrick's first major film, and it is blessed with a taut narrative, expressive black & white photography by Lucien Ballard (notably more varied in its effects than most color films of the period) and a wonderfully edgy, semi-dissonant musical score. The cast is an assemblage of distinctly marginal types who effectively represent the film's jaundiced view of human destiny.

Kubrick draws heavily on the conventions and themes of film noir while investing the work with engaging eccentricities: Sterling Hayden hits the race-track vault wearing a grotesquely smiling rubber clown mask, a felonious Armenian bruiser runs an Academy of Chess and Checkers, and hysterically squawking parrots accompany a homicidal marital squabble. And most unsettling, there's the shocking murder of a horse. For this, and more, *The Killing* deserves a place of prominence in film noir's kinky canon. ■

FOREIGN FILMS

continued from page 66

The older France, whose journey frames the story, finds a country very different from the one she grew up in, but *Chocolat* has nothing to do with how things got that way. At best, the film is a little disjointed — events and subtexts are suggested but not developed. This is especially true of the apparent sexual tension between France's beautiful mother (Giulia Boschi) and the servant Protee (Isaac de Bankole). If you're prepared for a somewhat languid but precisely crafted depiction of a vanished lifestyle, *Chocolat* should be of interest.

Macario is a haunting fable of a woodsman who learns a fatalistic lesson from Death. This small Mexican film by Roberto Gavaldon seems very simple on the surface, like a children's story, but it is engrossing and powerful. It received an Oscar nomination in 1960 for Best Foreign Film, but sadly it is not as widely

talked about as some of the films Bunuel made during the same period in Mexico.

This strange tale of magic and fate is told with a straightforwardness not unlike that of its title character (Ignacio Lopez), a poor woodcutter who can barely earn enough to feed his family but is always pure of heart. Macario learns the bitter lesson that it may not be enough to just do your best to be a good person. This isn't a surreal and subversive film like Bunuel's *Los Olvidados*, a disturbing portrait of life in the slums, but it certainly is a noteworthy example of serious Mexican cinema. ■

KIDVID

continued from page 68

lights package called *The Worst of YCDTOTV*. The "Don't Just Sit There" Survival Guide combines scenes from Nick's teen talk show with new comedy bits and crafts demonstrations. How to Throw a "Double Dare" Party includes tips for having good, clean (well, mostly clean) fun at your next celebration. Another six or so titles are expected later this year, and "Kidvid" will be reviewing them as they become available.

One of the latest series to come along on Nickelodeon (though not yet available on tape) is *Eureka's Castle*, which aims at preschoolers. A visit to the *Eureka* set proved yet again what a Big Deal the small screen can be.

According to Brown Johnson, Nickelodeon's executive in charge of production, the network has wanted to do a new preschool show for two years, but

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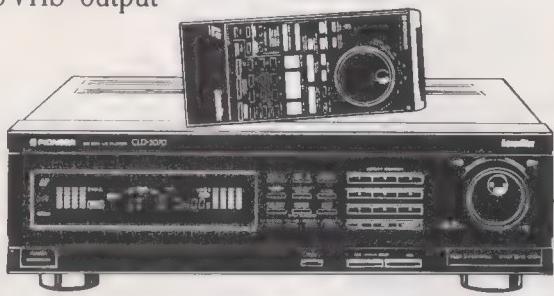
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the idea was difficult to actually implement. Nickelodeon actively avoids being perceived as the "green vegetables" network (i.e., good for kids), but the 2-to-5 age group is a highly impressionable one, Johnson admitted. The usual research and development that comes before any new series' launch had to be modified with new techniques for *Eureka*. Toddlers were polled with pictures they could point to and child psychologists were brought in to discuss the socializing skills the show needs to stress.

At the studio, Johnson introduced me to the series' puppet "stars": Magellan, a gentle, six-foot-tall baby dragon, and Eureka, a young, female wizard-in-training.

The hand puppets and "people puppets" (worn like costumes) make up the live action part of the show, directed by Hugh Martin, a *Mister Rogers* and *Reading Rainbow* veteran who was also producer/creator for the *Ramona* series. The puppet material provides the show's foundation. It is complemented by original animation and short films acquired from other sources, including the wonderful storybook adaptations of Children's Circle Library.

Sixty-five one-hour episodes have been produced for the daily series, a complicated edit of video, film and animation overseen by Kit Laybourne and Eli Noyes, of the production/animation company Noyes & Laybourne. N&L's work runs the gamut from MTV logo spots and Reebok commercials to many recommended children's efforts, like films for the United Nations and the recent storybook adaptation *Beauty and the Beast*. As Laybourne explained, the commercial work helps subsidize other projects by giving the team a chance to perfect new techniques. What's learned on a big-budget commercial shoot can be applied and adapted for smaller-scale productions like *Eureka's Castle*.

Laybourne attempted to explain the show's many and varying animation techniques in simple, human terms. One scene, involving two puppets swimming through a moat full of water and debris, required six puppeteers and three different animation and special effects processes. Five different animation techniques come into play on a regular basis in the series, ranging from clay creatures to traditional cel animation. In a typical nine-hour shooting day (not counting those crewmembers who arrive long before and stay long after), perhaps ten to 15 minutes of usable footage will be captured. Then there's the editing—all the various bits and pieces must be spliced together into the four 12-1/2-minute segments that make up each show (commercials fill out the hour).

Shooting and editing were done at the National Video Center Recording Studios in New York City, a production and editing house that has handled film and TV projects from *Tootsie* to *MTV*. Maybe *Eureka's Castle* wasn't the biggest game in TV-land on the afternoon of my visit, but you wouldn't know that from Laybourne's reaction as he watched the playback of a newly finished segment. As a puppet bat fell from Magellan's ceiling and startled the baby dragon in a successful blend of puppetry and effects, Laybourne's delighted reaction was Big Time—"George Lucas, watch out!" ■

TECH TIPS

Aesthetic antenna

If you don't have cable and you're tired of unsightly rabbit-ear antennas, try using ordinary speaker wire as an antenna. Just hook up the wire's conductors to the antenna terminals. You can hang the wire out the window, run it under the bed, or hide it under rugs or along a baseboard. Play around with the wire's position to improve reception.

Tim O'Brien
Manhattan Beach, California

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After filling the tape, rewind and reset the tape counter to zero. Then search through the tape, writing down the counter number after each five- or ten-minute segment passes on the recorded clock.

Stephen Shepard
Clifton, New Jersey

Distortion destroyer

When using an audio mixer to add music to a camcorder's live sound, it's easy to oversaturate the tape. This results in distortion during high-volume passages. A signal attenuator can help prevent this problem. To make one, carefully solder a 1/4-watt, 100-kilohm resistor be-

tween the center and ground connectors of the mini plug that fits into the camcorder's remote microphone jack. Use patience, a steady hand and a low-wattage soldering iron to avoid damaging the plug or the cable.

Mark A. Balaj
Ooltewah, Tennessee

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CANON CAMCORDER

continued from page 31

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The left end panel of the recorder conceals a compartment with the edit switch and connectors for video and audio line in/out, DC out for the RF adapter, stereo audio output, S-video in/out and control L remote.

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VIDEOTESTS

The real question is comfort: how easily an operator can hold the camcorder and reach the required buttons. We're accustomed to both still camera and camcorder operation, and we love the feel of the A1 Mark II. We find both grip options easy to use. Because of the additional stability, we're more partial to holding it like a still camera, and think many other manufacturers will eventually follow Canon's lead. We rate ease of operation as excellent, but strongly recommend that potential buyers hold it and try the controls, because the feel of an instrument is such a personal thing.

Performance. The A1 Mark II is a very good to excellent performer in Hi8 mode with a horizontal resolution of 400 lines and an unweighted luminance signal-to-noise ratio of 42.5 decibels. The weighted luminance S/N is 47.5 dB, the chroma AM S/N is 46.2 dB and the chroma PM S/N is 38.4 dB. These results are mostly better than those of the original A1 and competitive with the best Hi8 machines we've measured.

Standard 8mm delivers a horizontal resolution of 250 lines and an unweighted video S/N of 43.8 dB. The weighted video S/N is 51.5 dB, the

chroma AM S/N is 47.7 dB, and the chroma PM S/N is 38.5 dB. Overall, performance is very good/excellent with improvement in all but the chroma PM S/N.

The Mark II records in stereo through its mic or external stereo mic jack, but not through the line input. Both mono and stereo line outputs are provided. Other 8mm manufacturers are now using stereo AFM compatible with Canon. The audio frequency response is 20 Hertz to 10 kilohertz, +0.2/-10.8 dB, making it a bit less flat than the A1's response. The dynamic range is 71.7 dB with a total harmonic distortion of 0.3 percent. Audio quality is very good for Hi8 and 8mm.

Conclusion. The A1 Mark II is better than the A1 on both features and performance, earning a very good to excellent overall rating. We especially welcome the telemacro focus range, tracking autofocus that follows the subject, and S-video input that lets you use it as a full partner in an editing system. They complement all the features carried over from the earlier model. We recommend the A1 Mark II highly for its user-friendliness. ■

SONY TV

continued from page 34

A new blue phosphor produces cleaner whites and a new green phosphor maintains brightness over longer periods to produce excellent color, although yellows sing a bit. Horizontal resolution is 700 lines, as rated, with a luminance signal-to-noise ratio of 55.4 decibels. The chroma AM S/N is 62.7 dB; the chroma PM S/N is 62.4 dB. Picture quality is excellent.

Of the TV sound systems designed by outside companies, the Sony/Hughes SRS is the most pleasing we've heard. On movies with Dolby stereo, the SRS closely approaches the performance of the best stand-alone surround sound decoders and audio systems. On some non-movie material it can be a bit reverberant. The new SRS mono function recreates some of the information lost in the audio reproduction process. The SRS signal feeds the variable audio output but not the monitor output. The SRS system may also be turned off for plain vanilla sound that still maintains

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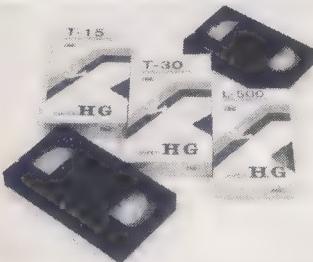
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Conclusion. The KPR-53EX20 offers an excellent 53-inch picture in a compact package, with excellent sound and ease of operation. Its overall rating is excellent. The suggested price of \$3,299 is competitive with models of this size, most of which have less appealing sound. If you're looking for a large projection system it should definitely be among those you consider. We recommend it highly. ■

VIDEOTESTS

control channel changing or tape motion functions. The front includes buttons for VCR power, eject, onscreen display (OSD), monitor, channel search, channel up and down, play, rewind/search, fast forward/search, stop, pause/still, frame advance, slow, double- and half-speed play, record, and slow motion speed adjusters.

Between the dedicated buttons and the jog/shuttle sit seven programmable buttons, a learn/use switch and indicators for learn and error. These buttons may be used to control any device that accepts IR signals. A panel holding most of the forward set of controls raises to expose secondary controls: tuning, clock/counter, programming, tracking, one-touch record (OTR) index and time search, record speed and input.

Operation. While having fewer buttons on the front of the machine may help it look elegant and may be less confusing, it requires a user to perform many functions from the remote. For example, the clock and counter share a display, which starts off in clock mode when the VCR is switched on. There is no way to see or use the counter without reaching for the remote. The remote's flip-up panel disables some of the surface buttons when it is opened, so for some operations, like index search and repeat, you'll be opening and closing the door a lot.

One really neat VR9970 feature we don't recall seeing often is the frame advance button which skips 60 seconds ahead when touched during normal playback. This makes it easy to bypass recorded commercial breaks. Most of the editing controls are only on the remote — some may prefer it this way, others may not. Some may find it convenient to remove the front panel door. Ease of operation is good to very good.

Performance. The VR9970 delivers 240 lines of horizontal resolution, typical for a VHS VCR. At the SP speed, the unweighted video signal-to-noise ratio is 49 decibels. The weighted video S/N is 54.6 dB, and the chroma AM S/N is 46.8 dB — all excellent measurements. Except for the weighted video S/N of 48.3 dB at LP and 47.9 dB at SLP, which are very good, all other measurements are fair.

The unweighted video S/N is 38.4 dB at LP and 38.7 dB at SLP. The weighted video S/N is 48.3 dB at LP and 47.9 dB at SLP. The chroma AM S/N is 40.2 dB at LP and 39.5 dB at SLP. The chroma PM S/N is 39.2 dB at SP, 34 dB at LP and 36.4 dB at SLP.

The average of all these measurements is very good, somewhat less than we expected. A check with Magnavox revealed our test deck to be a pre-

MAGNAVOX VCR

continued from page 32

pause/still, play/2x, and channel up and down.

The remote has the jog/shuttle dial and exposed buttons for commonly used functions. Separate buttons with indicators determine whether the dial will

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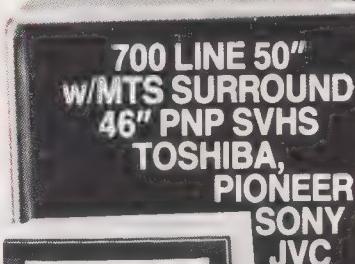
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52

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FEATURE FILMS ON 90
MIN. CASSETTES. ONLY-

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EACH IN CITY
OR YOUR
MONEY BACK.

What You See
Is What You Get

Now choose from 32 fantastic adult videos for as low as 75¢ each in quantity. Every 90 minute tape is jammed full of the hottest and hardest sex imaginable, featuring hundreds of famous stars & nasty newcomers. We guarantee that you will receive the great movies listed... Also, this offer comes with no strings attached or further obligations, we're convinced that once you see the great products and prices, you'll become one of our valued customers.



RAW



A FISTFUL OF BIMBOS



WET DREAM ON ELM ST.



BACK ON TOP



SEX SLUTS IN THE SLAMMER



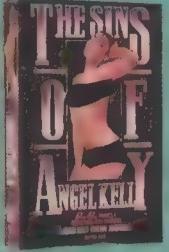
WHO REAMED ROSIE RABBIT



THE BIG GUN



MORE THAN FRIENDS



THE SINS OF ANGEL KELLY



ANGEL GETS EVEN



THE RED BARON



WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE



SEX CRAZY



ROBO FOX



GIRL WITH THE BLUE JEANS OFF



THE ALL AMERICAN GIRL



BORN FOR PORN



BEST BODY IN TOWN



ONE FLEW OVER CUCKOO BREAST



PARTNERS IN SEX



BUILT FOR SEX

SEX LIES

THE SLUT

THE BOSS

ROBO FOX II

LADY IN BLACK

KISSES DON'T LIE

THE BITCH IS BACK

FOR HER LIPS ONLY

FANTASY COUPLES

PUMPING IRENE II

MADE IN GERMANY

BEHIND THE SCENES

THIS BUNS FOR YOU

HANDLE WITH CARE

SUMO SUE & THE FLOW

LOVE FROM THE BACKSIDE

GUESS WHO CAME AT DINNER

WHO REAMED ROSIE RABBIT #2

ANGELA BARON'S FINAL FAREWELL

BIMBO CHEERLEADERS FROM OUTER SPACE

INVASION OF THE SAMURAI SLUTS FROM HELL

CAT SCRATCH FEVER

LOVE FROM THE BACKSIDE

GUESS WHO CAME AT DINNER

WHO REAMED ROSIE RABBIT #2

ANGELA BARON'S FINAL FAREWELL

BIMBO CHEERLEADERS FROM OUTER SPACE

INVASION OF THE SAMURAI SLUTS FROM HELL

PUMPING IRENE

PORN STAR'S DAY OFF

ANGELA TAKES A DARE

THREE MEN & A BABY

MY WIFE IS A CALL GIRL

ANGEL'S GOT TA HAVE IT

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

THE BITCH

PUMPING IRENE

PORN STAR'S DAY OFF

ANGELA TAKES A DARE

THREE MEN & A BABY

MY WIFE IS A CALL GIRL

ANGEL'S GOT TA HAVE IT

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

DONTS!

Order all 52

and receive

120 Cumshot

Tape FREE!

OUR SUPER DEALS

Any 5 For \$15

Any 15 For \$24

Any 35 For \$34

All 52 For \$39

POSTAGE & HANDLING

5 Videos \$3

15 Videos \$4

35 Videos \$5

52 Videos \$6

USE ENTIRE AD TO ORDER

FANTASTIC FEATURES & Dept. H70

P.O. Box M827, Gary In 46401-0827

Rush items indicated, I enclose \$_____ including P/H.
 Check Money Order Cash as payment in full.
Canadians remit in US funds only.

\$2 P/H, 100% Guaranteed Delivery Ins.
VHS Only! All models 18 yrs., records on 16.

For additional information, circle No. 43 on Reader Service Card.

Name _____

Addr. _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Sign. _____

B/day / /

Address _____

City _____

St./Zip _____



AMERICAS DIRTIEST HOME VIDEOS

49¢

EACH IN QD



Ever wonder what nasty, sexy things your neighbors are doing behind closed doors! Well here's your chance to look in on the private sex acts committed by **real people** in their own homes. Here's the real thing you've been waiting for!

Choose from 30 raunchy episodes.

- OFF THE FARM
- LEWD N' NUDE
- TASTE OF HONEY
- TEACH ME
- SEX LESSON #1
- ON THE MAKE
- GIRL NEXT DOOR
- SEX LESSON #2
- LUSTY LIFESTYLES
- NAUGHTY NEIGHBORS
- NOVICE NOOKIE
- DRIPPING
- PILLOW TALK
- LOVE STARVED
- HITHER
- BEHIND IT ALL
- OUT OF CONTROL
- NYMPHO NEW
- STARTER SET
- PRIVATE PASSIONS
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- OFFICE ANTICS
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- DOUBLE FEATURES
- MOUSTACHE RIDE
- JUST FRIENDS
- SHARING
- LUST TRIANGLE
- LOVE GLUE
- PURRFECT

All participants are 18 yrs. or older

OUR LOW PRICES

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20 VIDEOS \$12

ALL 30 VIDEOS ONLY \$14.70

POSTAGE & HANDLING

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20 VIDEOS ADD \$4

ALL 30 VIDEOS ADD \$5

Send entire ad & remittance to:

TOTALLY AMATEUR Dept. H70

P.O. BOX 10935

MERRILLVILLE, IN 46411

Rush the items indicated, I enclose \$_____ including P & H.

CASH MONEY ORDER CHECK AS PAYMENT IN FULL

COD ADD \$5

Canadians remit in US funds. No foreign COD's

Please specify: VHS BETA

Name _____

Add. _____

City _____

St./Zip _____

I am over 19 years old & request this material.

Signature _____

Age _____

B-Day _____

ADULTS ONLY!

CALL THE WOMEN OF...

Pleasure **PALACE**

**WHERE YOUR WISHES ARE
THEIR DESIRES!**



1-900-988-4200

For additional information, circle No. 45 on Reader Service Card.

\$2 PER MIN.

Choose from the highest quality, hottest all black and interracial videos ever produced at unbelievably low prices. Each tape is recorded in high resolution SUPERVISION® complete with digitally mastered musical score. All tapes are delivered factory fresh in their own boxes guaranteed free of defects. Order yours today.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!

Not delighted with every aspect of your purchase? Return for a full refund or exchange.

PRICES

- 10 for \$12.00
- 20 for \$21.00
- 30 for \$24.30

- 10 Videos \$4
- 30 or 70 Videos \$10
- COD send \$5 extra postage

No Foreign ADDS
Canadian remit in US\$

BLACK BONANZA!

VIDEOS AS LOW AS 39¢ EA

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black On Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Milk Chocolate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make A Wish | <input type="checkbox"/> Ebony |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Back To Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasure's Finest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After Midnight | <input type="checkbox"/> All Night Long |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mocha Creme | <input type="checkbox"/> Triple Black Fantasy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ebony Erotica | <input type="checkbox"/> Little Bit Of Soul |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black Starlets | <input type="checkbox"/> Hot Black Lips |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Sugar | <input type="checkbox"/> Ebony & Ivory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Cool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jump On It | <input type="checkbox"/> Purple Passion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dark & Sweet | <input type="checkbox"/> Behind The Black Door |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soul Holes | <input type="checkbox"/> That Old Black Magic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black Beauty | <input type="checkbox"/> My Black |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slam Dunks | <input type="checkbox"/> Prince Of Harlem |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apollo Lust | <input type="checkbox"/> Cummin' In America |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hot Pepper | <input type="checkbox"/> Famous Black |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rare Treat | <input type="checkbox"/> On The Darkside |
| <input type="checkbox"/> So Fine | <input type="checkbox"/> Black |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heating Up | <input type="checkbox"/> Coccos & Cream |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slow Dancing | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Supersuck |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black Balled | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Stockings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bare Soul | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensational Blacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ghetto Lust | <input type="checkbox"/> Black |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dark Meat | <input type="checkbox"/> The Big Bulge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zebra Crew | <input type="checkbox"/> Ebony |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dark Taboo | <input type="checkbox"/> Blacks & Blondes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black Studs | <input type="checkbox"/> Harlem Honey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afric Animal | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting Down |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oreo Girls | <input type="checkbox"/> Open Invitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shafted | <input type="checkbox"/> Black |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salt & Pepper | <input type="checkbox"/> Hung & Horny |
| <input type="checkbox"/> King | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Eaters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nasty Blacks | <input type="checkbox"/> Matched Pairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After Dark | <input type="checkbox"/> Got The Fever |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soul Train | |

Send entire ad & remittance to: PROGRESSIVE VIDEO Dept. H70
P.O. Box 10935 Merrillville, IN 46411

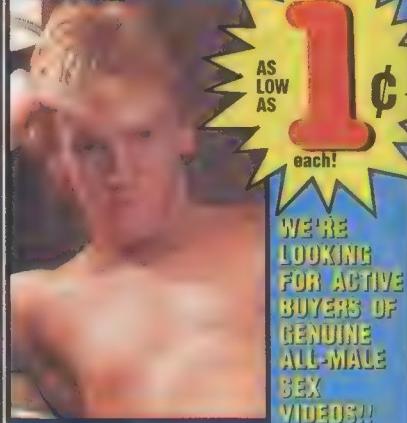
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Name _____

Add/Apt# _____

City/St./Zip _____

I am over 19 yrs old. Sign _____



THE Video SERVICE

AS LOW AS 1¢ each!

WE'RE LOOKING FOR ACTIVE BUYERS OF GENUINE ALL-MALE SEX VIDEOS!!

ON 60 MINUTE CASSETTES

In order to further expand our list of satisfied customers, we've cut out the middleman to bring you a most unusual offer. We are willing to give you the hottest collection of videos ever assembled for an unbelievable 1¢ each, plus shipping costs! This will entitle you to receive regular discounts on new hardcore releases and specialty videos from our giant catalog. This offer comes with now strings attached, and no threatening letters in the future. So stop paying top dollar for your XXX entertainment, and start buying direct from THE VIDEO SERVICE!

YOU'LL RECEIVE THESE 42 HOT HITS...

SLAMMERS	HEAVY LOADS
BLACK	JOB
SLICK	LUST
FIST	KING KONG
ROUND POUND	BEEF STROKED OFF
GROUP JERK	GROUP GROPE
ON MY FACE	PLUGGERS
SHOOT IT ALL	MAKE ME
STROKE JOB	THIS LOADS FOR YOU
PETER EATER	REAMERS
LICKING LOADS	DOUBLE
TAKE IT ALL	GANG
ALL THE WAY IN	OFF
TWIN	TEN INCH CLUB
ERUPTING	FILL THE CUP
SUCKER	ON THEIR OWN
PLUNGE	BOTTOMS UP
DEEPER THROAT	WET SHORTS
THIS	GOLDEN BOYS
UP HIS	UP ALL NIGHT
GREASE THE PALM	STAINED SHEETS
	BEND OVER

BONUS!!

90 CUMSHOT VIDEO
FREE!!!
If you Order within
the next 30 days!!

YES!! Rush my 42 Videos!
I understand that if my order
is placed within 30 days, I
receive the _____ video
absolutely FREE!!

I've enclosed \$25 (that's 1¢ plus 50¢ each for shipping).
Canadians add \$10, remit in US funds only.
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PO BOX M877, GARY, IN 46401-0877

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Signature _____

I am over 19 years of age. Specify: VHS BETA



ALL MALE ACTION VIDEOS & MAGAZINES

THE HOTTEST, HARDEST, HUNKIEST MALE SUPERSTARS NOW IN 20 HARDCORE NO HOLES BARRED VIDEOS.

FOR ONLY 98¢ EACH

PLUS POSTAGE & HANDLING
PICK YOUR FAVORITE TITLE

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- Butt Darts Guys Who Crave Black
- Guys With Big Guys Who Luv
- The Harder The Better The Big
- Guys Who Luv Big Nuts Licking Lads
- Nuders Hard Buddies
- Coasted Rods Stuffed
- Way For Four
- Headmaster Best Of
- Uncut Deep

OUR SPECTACULAR PRICES

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- ANY 6 FOR \$10 ALL 20 FOR \$19.90
- 20 ALL COLOR • GLOSSY MAGS ONLY \$12

USE ENTIRE AD TO ORDER

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P.O. Box M827 Gary, IN 46401-0827

Rush Items Indicated. I enclose \$_____ & \$4 P.H.
 Cash Money Order Check as payment in full.

Canadians remit in US Funds. No Foreign C.O.D.'s.

Send \$8 COD plus P.H.

Please Specify: VHS BETA

Name _____

Address _____ Apt# _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Sign/Age/Date _____

I am over 19 years of age and request this material.

For additional information, circle No. 46 on Reader Service Card.

THE Better Sex Video SERIES™



Discover the new world of sex games and toys.

Order the video sex manuals of the 1990's today. Each approximately 90 minutes. Shipped unmarked for your privacy. Trained at Masters & Johnson Institute, Dr. Fred Shotz guides you through erotic scenes of explicit sexual practices.

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Check Visa MasterCard Exp. Date _____

Account Number _____

Signature _____
I certify I am at least 21 years of age.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Allow 2-5 weeks for delivery.

Video	Qty.	Price Ea.	Total
Vol 2, Adv. Sexual Techniques		\$39.95	
Vol. 3, Sex Games and Toys		\$39.95	

Postage & Handling

Total \$

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Soaking Hot Sex

CALIFORNIA NYMPHOS

A \$19.95 VALUE

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- Insatiable babes unleash erotic desires!
- Wriggling sex in up-close, graphic detail!
- 30 mouth-watering minutes in high quality color!

ORDER NOW, GET FREE CATALOG PLUS 50% OFF OFFER.

If coupon has been removed, please send order to **VideoMail** **SATISFACTION GUARANTEED.**

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clip and mail with payment today.

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No cash or COD's please

YES! Rush my FREE video, **CALIFORNIA NYMPHOS** (#5664), in plain packaging. Enclosed is my check or bank money order for \$4.95.

Send my videocassette in Beta VHS format.

NAME _____ (I am 21 years of age or older.)

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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9 Secrets to Hotter Sex!

THE LOVE TUNNEL

Exclusively from Adam & Eve — the most lifelike masturbation sleeve we've ever found! Made of pliable latex, the secret is the special fluid-filled sleeve that stays hot when you heat it under warm water. Its plump softness inside simulates a woman's vagina — fleshy & supple, plus it has a multi-speed vibrator in the inner base. Measuring a full 4½" deep, sizzling strokes of pleasure! Was \$29.95. **NOW \$19.95.**

HOT ROCKET LAUNCHER

MEN! Sink your hot rocket into this silky smooth masturbation sleeve. Vibrating sleeve is made of textured, flesh-colored latex. Includes a 6" interior sleeve for custom fit. Insert your penis and squeeze the air bulb until you're snug in the cockpit. Turn on the vibrator and pump the bulb for the finest in remote controlled blow-jobs! When you're ready, begin counting: 10, 9, 8...BLAST OFF! Powered by 2 AA batteries (not included). Was \$24.95. **NOW \$19.95.**

FREE PHOTO BOOK

To introduce you to Adam & Eve's exclusive line of sexual bestsellers, we're making an unprecedented offer! A FREE 176 page book bursting with explicit photos of the most arousing sexual positions you've ever seen! Send just \$2 for postage and handling and we'll rush your FREE photo book plus our latest catalog. **\$2.00 p/h.**

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Imagine gorgeous studs and starlets — all in the same room — in a frenzy of sexual bliss. Our camera roams from group to group: You'll see wet lesbian licks . . . Amber Lynn and Sharon Mitchell share a beefy stud . . . Francois Papillon and Robert Bullock double penetrate a horny blonde . . . John Holmes heaves his massive member into a lusty lady . . . Robert Bullock and Candy Samples get it on . . . and much, much more. A \$20.00 value! Yours FREE!! You pay only postage & handling. (\$4.95).

ADAM & EVE CUSTOMERS TELL ALL

Uncensored Lust! Here are the best of those sizzling adventures and fantasy stories sent to us by our customers. This exciting volume is a pure turn-on; 159 pulse-pounding pages including dozens of explicit photos. **\$4.95.**

100% GUARANTEE ON ALL ITEMS!



THE BIG TEN INCH

The pleasure's all yours with our longest supersoft vibrator! Turn on its multi-speed vibrations and you'll get off again & again! The flexible 10-inch long, 2½" thick phallus is made of soft latex & is foam-filled. So flesh-like it'll drive you wild with ecstasy!

Reg. \$24.95. Now \$16.95.

G-SPOT MASSAGER

The specially curved head is angled to point unerringly at the Grafenborg Spot! Made of flexible latex & multi-speed. Powered by 2 AA batteries (not included). Explicit photo instructions included. Reg. \$24.95. **Now only \$9.95!!**

COMPLETE MANUAL OF SEXUAL POSITIONS

A full chapter about the G-Spot (and how to find it!) 160 big pages, over 200 hot color and B&W photos of sex techniques for couples and threesomes. Was \$14.95; **NOW \$6.95.**

SPECIAL OFFER, SAVE \$2.00! Get both — the fabulous G-Spot Massager AND The Complete Manual of Sexual Positions — for just **\$14.95!!**

CARESS

A vibrator made of latex so soft, so fleshlike, and so flexible you'll swear it's the real thing! Lightly textured, it yields to inner contours, plus, it's multi-speed. 7" long. Powered by 2 AA batteries (not included). \$17.95. Save **\$5!** Now \$12.95!

FREE MYSTERY GIFT!

If you order right now you'll receive a FREE MYSTERY GIFT — sensuously yours from Adam & Eve! We can't tell you what it is — but we promise it will be something you'll love. It's yours free with any order!

Free 48-page color catalog with all orders!

Adam & Eve

Please rush in plain package:
P.O. Box 900, Dept. VL
Carrboro, N.C. 27510

6658

<input type="checkbox"/> #1419 The Love Tunnel	\$19.95	<input type="checkbox"/> #1355 G-Spot Massager	\$ 9.95
<input type="checkbox"/> #1952 Hot Rocket Launcher	\$19.95	<input type="checkbox"/> #3132 Complete Manual of Sexual Positions	\$ 6.95
<input type="checkbox"/> #1652 FREE Photo Book .&p.h only	\$ 2.00	<input type="checkbox"/> #1458 G-Spot Massager & Complete Manual	\$14.95
<input type="checkbox"/> #6477 FREE XXX Sex Video .&p.h only	\$ 4.95	<input type="checkbox"/> #6148 Careess	\$12.95
<input type="checkbox"/> #2326 A&E Customers Tell All	\$ 4.95	<input type="checkbox"/> #6658 FREE MYSTERY GIFT WITH ALL ORDERS	
<input type="checkbox"/> #2450 Big Ten Inch	\$16.95		

Name _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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VIDEO CLASSIFIEDS

ADULT

VIDEO Magazine's Classified Rates
\$6.00 Per Word-15 Word Minimum
\$500.00 Per Inch 1X
\$480.00 Per Inch 6X
\$432.00 Per Inch 12X
Call Mary Au at 212-947-6500 for more information!
(*frequency rates available!)

"MISS NUDE HOLLYWOOD '89". PARADE OF NUDIST BEAUTIES SPREADING AND POSING AT NAKED CITY LOS ANGELES WORLD FAMOUS RESORT. ALSO "MISS NUDE NCLA CONTEST". 60 MINUTES. ALSO "LOLLIPOP STRIPEASE VOLUMES 1,2,3". CHARMING PANTIE POSING AND LOVABLE YOUNG STRIPPERS. CATALOG \$1.00, \$40.00 (1), \$65.00 (2), \$95.00 (3), \$110.00 (4). PLEASURETIME VIDEO, 7439 LaPALMA #237, BUENA PARK, CA 90620.

ROB LOWE TAPE, Many Famous Stars Nude. 90 Minutes \$39.00. Catalog Foreign Unusual Free With Order or \$5.00 MC/Visa: Expectations, 6883 Bird, Miami, FL 33155.

STUNNING BEAUTIFUL SLIM CALIFORNIA MODELS WITH BIG BOOBS strip naked and pose tantalizingly for the video camera. 15 GIRL SAMPLER \$19.95 + \$2.40 Rush Shipping. Sun & Fun Productions, 1765 Garnet Avenue, Pacific Beach, CA 92109.

NUDIST / NATURIST VIDEOS / MAGAZINES. NEW SELECTION. \$2.00. S.A.S.E.: NATPLUS-VID, BOX 9296, NEWARK, DE 19714-9296.

WE SPECIALIZE IN SENSUAL VIDEOS OF TOP FEMALE PROFESSIONAL DANCERS AND FITNESS EXPERTS. **FANTASTIC BODIES!** CATALOGUE \$3.00 (CREDITED): C.R.L., P.O. BOX 165, LEETSDALE, PA 15056.

CLASSIC VINTAGE STAG FILMS, 40's to 60's arcade nudes & strippers. 1970's peep show loops. **COLLECTORS ITEMS**, all on video. VHS/BETA Large Selection - Catalog \$3.00 **ADULT FILM TO TAPE TRANSFERRING**, Regular & Super 8 - Lowest prices available. FILMFARE VIDEO LABS, INC., Dept. A, 2508-Fifth Avenue, Suite 175, Seattle, WA 98121.

SPANNING - MANY BLISTERING HOT NEW TITLES - CATALOG AVAILABLE \$5.00 (Refundable with 1st order): RedBoard Video, Sta. B, P.O. Box 2069, San Francisco, CA 94126. (STATE AGE).

CO-EDS, SECRETARIES, AIRLINE STEWARTESSES, ADVERTISE ON VHS to Meet Men for Swinging. Hot Correspondence! Nude Photo-Sets, Videos. **Names & Address** for Contact. 2 Hours-\$39.00, 3-\$49.00, 4-\$59.00, 5-\$69.00, 6-\$79.00. Mastercard, Visa accepted. **VIDEO SELECT**, 50 Squaw Rock Road, Danielson, CT 06239. Phone Order (203) 774-7789.

THE LARGEST DEALER OF FETISH VIDEOS
 BONDAGE • BIG "E" • FEMALE DOM SPANNING • THANSEXUAL • PREGNANT TICKLING AND MORE!
 PHOTO PACKED 100 PAGE CATALOG OF 700 BIZARRE VIDEOS \$5.00
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VIDEO CLASSIFIEDS

NUDE BEAUTY PAGEANT 1978 - Rare film - first time available on video. 30 Beautiful gals never seen before. Color sound 35 minutes \$35.00. **STUNNERS** - England's newspaper models topless, panties, nude. 60 minutes \$40.00. **G-STRING GALS** - New! 50 topless teasers shake boobs - bend over in hard rock dance competition. 90 minutes \$40.00. Catalog \$1.00. IPI Video Co., 2521 Big Bend, St. Louis, MO 63143. Check, Money Order. MC/Visa 314-647-4419.

NAKED LOLITAS OF BRAZIL VOLUME 9. Filmed entirely on the beaches of Rio. (No nudity) \$50.00: BRAZIL VIDEO, P.O. Box 8572, La Jolla, CA 92038.

TORMENTING, TEASING, TICKLING Fantasies in Custom Made Videos. Send \$10.00 for Quote. Videos now available "Silk Stocking Tickler", "Tormenting Warrior" \$24.95 each + \$3.00 S&H: Diane Peerless, P.O. Box 1378, Hanford, CA 93232.

42-DD LOVERS SPECIAL: KIM & TONI both have big round NAKED 42-DD BOOBIS! 2-hr VHS! \$33 postpaid. **AQUA VIDEO**, 9 Southmoor Circle, Kettering, OH 45429. Hot!

FREE VIDEO !!

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ENJOY THE SENSUAL WORLD
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EUROPEAN LESBIAN AND WATERSPORT VIDEOS! LIST \$5.00: V.S., 6331 FAIRMOUNT AVENUE, EL CERRITO, CA 94530. SEND NO POSTCARDS.

XXX CLOSEUP AMATEUR VIDEOS - Oral, Anal, Upskirt. Watersports and More. Broadcast Quality. 60 Minute Hardcore preview tape \$39.00. GSR, 4630 South Kirkman Road, Suite 148, Orlando, FL 32811.

ADULTS ONLY VIDEO, A PRIVATELY MADE TOTALLY ADULT VIDEO MADE ON LOCATION AT FLORIDA'S #1 SEXY NO-HOLDS BARRED NIGHTCLUB. IF YOU GET TURNED ON BY GIRLS STRIPPING AND EXPOSING THEMSELVES TOTALLY THEN DON'T MISS - **PRIVATE BOOTH** - RATED AS THE... "THE SEXIEST STRIPEASE VIDEO EVER MADE" - \$39.95. SAVE \$10.00 BY USING MC/VISA. (407) 249-2018". **HSB, 955 WEST LANCASTER ROAD, SUITE #340, ORLANDO, FL 32809.**

BI LADIES LOVING. Many All-Female X-Videos. Affordable. Listing \$1.00 (Refundable). Sapphire Productions, 12021 Wilshire, Suite 526, Los Angeles, CA 90025.

TICKLING! EROTIC, TANTALIZING ACTION! New Releases! Illustrated Brochure \$1.00. Preview Tape \$29.00. EE Limited, P.O. Box 362, Berlin, NJ 08009.

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VIDEO CLASSIFIEDS

BOOTS & SADDLES

After being picked up by Scorpio, Joe discovers the weird and kinky sex practices of this hunky and sadistic neo-Nazi. WARNING! This movie is very explicit showing the dangers one is subjected to when tricking with total strangers. X RATED ALL MALE CAST.

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- ALL OVER
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- CRAZY
- LEAKING LOINS
- HARD & READY
- CHUNKY CHICKS
- BLONDE SEX
- SPURTS OF LOVE
- DRILL
- HOT BODS
- RUMP ROMP
- SEX STROKES
- JIGGLING JUGGS
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- PORN QUEENS
- TEASE ME
- PALS
- DOUBLE HEADER
- DEEP-N-HARD
- SUCK MY [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] TOE
- SOAK MY [REDACTED]
- SEX PACK
- BI-BI LOVE
- CLAM DIP
- CATHON
- ROUGH RIDERS
- REAMED MEAT
- PUMPING JIZM
- BACKDOOR AFFAIR
- BOTH HOLES
- BEND OVER
- RIDE ME
- ME
- DEEPER THROAT
- LICKING LEZ
- BATTERING RAM
- DEEPERI DEEPERI
- SALAMI [REDACTED] OFF
- SWEET CHEEKS
- TIGHT [REDACTED]
- LICK
- ALL THE WAY IN
- WET LIPS
- HOT & PINK
- CHEERLEADERS
- MAKE ME [REDACTED]

- ORAL NYMPHS
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- SLUTS
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- KING SIZE BOOBS
- SHAVED & SEXY
- PLUGGED UP
- WELL HUNG STUDS
- TINGLING TUSHES
- TITANIC [REDACTED]
- GUSHING GONADS
- SPERM BANK
- SEX STARVED
- FACE ACTION
- FEST
- WET HUMP
- BIG BLACK LOADS
- BALL BUST
- BIG [REDACTED] BLOW
- HOT HOLES
- SPURTING LOADS
- SIT ON MY [REDACTED]
- BLACK HEAD
- LIQUID LIPS
- MY BOOBS
- BLACK [REDACTED]
- PLEASURE
- FREAKY FOURSOME
- CRAVERS
- SHOOT IT ALL
- NO HOLES BARRED
- KING SIZE
- SUPER HEAD
- SPREAD [REDACTED]
- CREAMY OREO
- BLACK & WHITE [REDACTED]
- IN THE REAR
- LUST TRIANGLE
- 69 ACTION
- DIVE
- 3 AT ONCE
- EAT MY [REDACTED]
- GAZONGAS
- LICK MY HOLE

- GANG BANG
- ATTACK
- ENDLESS LOADS
- ROUND POUND
- SLAMMERS
- BATH
- SIZZLING TONGUE
- ADULT FUN
- NITE DEPOSITS
- THROBBIN'
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- MASSIVE MANHOOD
- STROKER'S WILD
- RAMRODDERS
- HORNY HOUSEWIVES
- MAMMOTH MOUNDS
- JUICY PANTIES
- PANTY CHEWS
- HOTEL HOOKERS
- OPEN & WILLING
- TWEAK
- HOT [REDACTED]
- BLACK BUSTERS
- WOMB BROOM
- TICKLING TONGUES
- TWIN LICKING
- TONGUE PROBES
- PUMPING SEX
- BLACK LEZ
- PINK [REDACTED]
- SHOOT YOUR STUFF
- HORNY SLUTS
- CLIMAXING CUM
- PINK TUNNEL
- GROUP GROPE
- POONFEST
- BEACH BLANKET BANG
- TAKE IT ALL
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- SAUNA SEX
- TICKLER
- SEX SANDWICH
- BATH
- WHACKER
- KING [REDACTED]

- ADVENTURES
- HOT FLESH
- SCREW 'EM ALL
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- DOWN MY THROAT
- BUN LOVERS
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- PETER PUSH
- GROPE
- HARD & HORNY
- JERKING LOADS
- SHE LOVES IT HARD
- NAKED NYMPHS
- SLICK CHICKS
- DEEP INSIDE
- KINKY COEDS
- EATERS
- LUSTING LOINS
- SCREW MY [REDACTED]
- FILL HER UP
- SILICON BOOB
- BLONDE SANDWHICH
- BALL BLOWOUT
- SPREAD IT WIDE
- HOT [REDACTED]
- VIXENS IN HEAT
- THREE WAY [REDACTED]
- SHAVED CHICKS
- CLIMAXING CUM
- PINK TUNNEL
- GROUP GROPE
- POONFEST
- BEACH BLANKET BANG
- TAKE IT ALL
- RAMMED REAMS
- FINGER FANTASY
- PETER EATERS
- LIP SERVICE
- TRIPLE SEX PLAY
- FOUNTAINS OF LOVE
- CHOCOLATE PUDDING
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- SEX SANDWICH
- BATH
- WHACKER
- KING [REDACTED]

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Send entire ad to **LEISURE CONCEPTS 32** Dept. H70
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I enclose \$_____ plus \$4 P/H as payment in full.
In the form of Check Money Order

**SPECIAL: BUY #SMP4 AND #VCT7 on this ad
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E51
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Wireless remote control
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Now, creative video is easier than ever with the new E640 from Canon. Our exclusive new Multi-Function AF with Auto Framing automatically maintains subject size within the frame while you zoom. Plus, the E640 has a wireless remote control, super-sharp 8x power zoom lens and Canon's unique 180° FlexiGrip™.

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production unit. Slow-speed performance may improve somewhat in final production units. In any case, consumers concerned with slow-speed picture quality should ask their dealers for a demonstration.

Audio frequency response on the hi-fi track is 20 Hertz to 20 kilohertz, +0.1/-2.8 dB, with a dynamic range of 82.3 dB and a total harmonic distortion of 0.4 percent. Hi-fi performance is excellent. Linear track performance is good with a -3 dB frequency response of 75 Hz to 10 kHz at SP, 75 Hz to 5 kHz at LP and 75 Hz to 4 kHz at SLP. The linear track audio S/N is 37.5 dB with a total harmonic distortion of 1.6 percent. Audio performance averages very good.

Conclusion. The Magnavox VR9970 is a relatively strong performer at the SP speed and on hi-fi audio. It has an impressive list of features and looks simple and elegant. Because most of the controls are only on the remote, it is better suited for the armchair operator than the hands-on type who wants to edit, even though it has synchro edit and a jog/shuttle control. We recommend it for the casual user who uses the SP speed most of the time. ■

HOME EDITING

continued from page 39

narration by using an audio mixer.

If you're lucky enough to have a deck with audio dub, you can perform the whole process on the recording deck. All you have to do is find the starting point for your dub, then hit the pause button. When you're ready with your music or narration, hit the audio dub button and start the sound.

Video dubbing, whether done during editing or using a video dub function, works much the same way as audio dub. The exception is that you have to use the original audio to monitor the process. Again, you should zero the recorder's counter at the end of the segment to be recorded over, rewind, perform the dub, and stop when the counter reaches zero.

Video titling generally takes two forms. The most primitive method, although by no means the least attractive or creative, is to shoot copy printed on a card, and add it to your videos using the camcorder's digital superimpose.

Cleaner, more professional-looking

titles usually come from a character generator. Many camcorders include CGs, as do some VCRs and outboard editing controllers. Several manufacturers also offer dedicated character generators, and most camcorder makers offer an optional CG that can be interfaced with their machines.

The newest, most exciting form of titling falls in the rapidly expanding realm of computer-generated effects. Using computers such as those from Commodore's Amiga line, you can fashion professional-looking graphics, including titles, frames, backdrops, scanned images and animations. But to superimpose computer-generated titles onto existing video scenes, you must use a genlocking device, which synchronizes video signals from the playback VCR and the computer.

As you transform ice cream, cake, ribbons and wrapping into Sally's Birthday Party: The Movie, you'll need one more component for testing the precision of your edits and the cleverness of your special effects: a video monitor.

Many ace editors prefer one window on their work. One monitor will allow you to scan your master tape and define the scene you wish to edit into the work-

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<p>Panasonic PV-835 NEW! PIP DIGITAL FULL SIZE MOVIE 8x Zoom, Dual Camera Sys., 3 Lux, Comp. w/case</p>	<p>RCA CC-311 NEW! FULL SIZE VHS MOVIE 8x1 Zoom, Pre-Edit, w/Hard Case, 10W Light</p>	<p>SONY AV RECEIVERS, CD PLAYERS, CASSETTE DECKS AND RACK SYSTEMS CALL FOR PRICE!</p>	<p>Canon H-680 NEW! HIGH BAND 8MM 8x1 Zoom, Hi Fi Stereo, A/F Macro</p>	<p>Panasonic PV-520 NEW! FULL SIZE VHS MOVIE 8xZoom 10W Light, 3 Lux, Manual Iris, VHS Indexing</p>	<p>SONY CCD-F55 8MM MOVIE 8x1 Zoom, 1 Pg. Dig. S/Imp. Wireless Rem. Con., 2 Lux</p>	<p>JVC GR-600 VHS-C MOVIE 8xZoom, Insert Edit, Retake, Dubbing, 4Pg./Superimpose</p>
<p>JVC GR-S77U NEW! SVHS SUPER VHS-C MOVIE 4 Page Superimpose 8 to 1 Zoom, 8 Heads</p>	<p>Panasonic PV-530 NEW! FULL SIZE VHS MOVIE Digital Effects, 10W, Color Enhanc. Light B/in Sprk</p>	<p>Panasonic AG-1960 SVHS INDUSTRIAL DECK Jog Shuttle, Flying Erase Head, Hi-Fi Stereo</p>	<p>Nikon VN-910 NEW! Same as Sony CCD-TR5 SMALLEST 8MM IN THE WORLD 6x Pwr. Zoom, Superimp., Date & Time, Weighs 2lbs</p>	<p>TOSHIBA SV-F900 SUPER VHS EDIT RECORDER Video Scanner, Digital Special Effects! Jog Shuttle</p>	<p>Canon E-640 8MM NEW! 8MM MOVIE Auto Frame, Focus Mem., Zoom Mem., A.F., Macro</p>	<p>JVC HR-S6000U NEW! HRS-10000 or HRS-8000 8 HEAD DIGITAL SUPER VHS Broadcast Stereo Hi-Fi Flying Erase Heads</p>
<p>TOSHIBA CARVER* Sonic Holography® Stereo MTS 27: CX-2788 32: CX-3288 CP-3284J 3-Dimensional Sound Built-in Sub-Woofer</p>	<p>PIONEER CLD-2070/CLD-3070 Plays all 5 Disc sizes, 425 Lines Reso., DibySurf., 40W Stereo, L/Remote</p>	<p>JVC AV-3589S AV-3779S SURROUND 700 Lines Reso., DibySurf., 40W Stereo, L/Remote</p>	<p>Panasonic PV-4990 NEW! SVHS Hi Fi Flying Erase Head, Learning Remote, Auto Tracking</p>	<p>PIONEER SDP-503 SDP-553 DIGITAL! Rear Proj. Mon./Rec. S-VHS Input, Dig. Pic/Pic.</p>	<p>JVC HR-S6600U NEW! BEST HOME EDIT VCR Hi Fi Stereo, A/V Tracking, Jog Shuttle, Fly Erase Head</p>	<p>VIDEONICS PRO ED PLUS Graphics & Charac. Gen. Storage Library</p>

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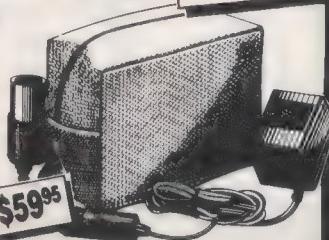
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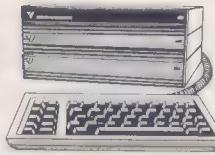
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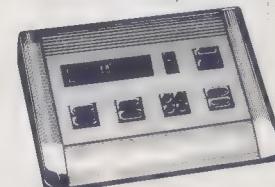
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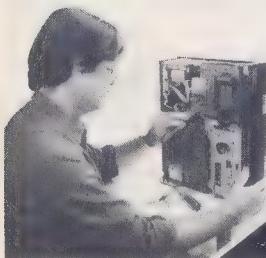
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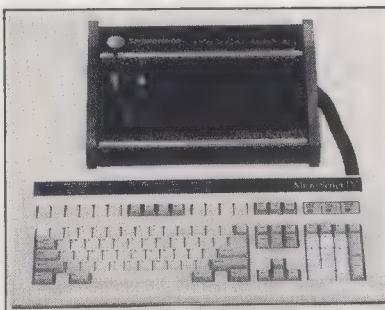
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ing tape. At the flick of a button on the monitor, you can switch from video input 1 (the playback deck) to input 2 (the recorder) and watch your edit taking shape.

With practice, your edits will become smoother, and your productions more polished. But you can produce much better tapes right from the start by following two rules: 1) plan ahead, and 2) use as few recording generations as possible.

The ticket to effective planning is the storyboard, an outline of the production's audio and video content, camera direction and special effects. And before you say, "Aw, c'mon, I don't need a storyboard to videotape Sally's fifth birthday party," hear the chorus of experts: "Yes, you do!" That is, if you want to create an entertaining tape that can be enjoyed and even admired. Otherwise, you'll have footage, not a movie.

Although you can sketch out your plan on a legal pad, preprinted storyboards can be a whole lot neater. Typically, a storyboard presents a series of printed blank TV screens, which you fill with simple drawings (stick figures will do) of each scene. Boxes or columns for scripting, camera directions (wide shot, close-up, zoom) and editing notes (cut, fade, wipe) run alongside or below the screens. Alternately, you can use sheets of paper with three columns: one for describing scenes, one for camera and editing directions, and one for audio.

Keeping generational loss to a minimum is possibly the best way home videographers can ensure good picture quality. Consumer-grade video images usually hold up well through the second (and sometimes third) generation, but degrade quickly in further generations.

The best way to avoid adding generations is to plan ahead. Have your music, original videotapes, and equipment ready to go when you start your editing session, so you won't have to add extra footage, and another generation, later.

Sometimes making a rough cut—a quick-and-dirty version of your final production—helps show how well your vision of the program translates to tape. When viewing the rough cut, note which scenes seem flat and uninteresting, and plan to edit in titles, additional footage, music or narration to pick up the pace. Also, watch the edit points carefully, to make sure the scenes flow together smoothly. If someone's facing one way in one frame and the other way in the next, you may decide not to butt these two scenes together.

This ought to be enough information to get you started. Now all you need is patience. And a five-year-old with a lot of friends.

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HI-DEF

continued from page 51

which the Research Consortium was formed. The consortium, which has asked the Justice Department for an antitrust exemption, was created in January when Philips joined what had been the Advanced Compatible TV group. ACTV, in fact, has already been tested over the air: Last April engineers at the Sarnoff Center in Princeton, New Jersey, viewed an ACTV version of WNBC-TV's *Live at Five* news broadcast.

Thomson and Philips are also two of the largest TV set manufacturers in the U.S. Thomson has the RCA and GE brands, and Philips markets under Magnavox and Sylvania in addition to its own name. They expect to have ACTV sets in full production by 1993 if the FCC chooses their system. Thomson last year announced plans to build wide-screen picture tubes at its existing picture tube factory in Marion, Indiana.

This is just about the only point on which most HDTV developers agree: However the FCC chooses, TV set manufacturers will be able to sell receivers within a year of the decision—perhaps

within a few months. "We had stereo TV sets in stores two and a half months after stereo was approved," noted Donahue. "We didn't start work after the standard was set. We gambled."

ACTV offers several improvements over NTSC images: a wider aspect ratio of 16:9, video noise reduction circuits to defeat "ghosting" and other NTSC artifacts, and greater picture detail. ACTV promises 410 lines of horizontal and 480 lines of vertical resolution.

Moreover, ACTV is compatible with NTSC; proponents often refer to it as an extension of the current system. The ACTV signal from the studio is divided into three components for broadcast: high and low spatial frequencies that contain picture detail, brightness and color data, and side-panel information needed to widen the aspect ratio.

The three signals are encoded so broadcasters can transmit them within a standard six-megahertz channel. An NTSC TV set would receive a conventional signal while an ACTV set would piece together the extra information.

Outside development labs, the betting is that technology alone may not decide this competition. Political maneuvers are taking the decision out of

the hands of engineers, according to Washington insiders who have witnessed the rising protectionist sentiment in Congress over the last two years.

"It doesn't change a thing," says a Washington lobbyist for a Japanese manufacturer about the powerful alliance between Philips, Thomson, Sarnoff and NBC. Fair or not, he adds, Philips and Thomson are "just a bunch of foreigners" as far as Congress is concerned.

According to the lobbyist, Congress will pressure the FCC to choose a standard developed by an American-owned company. The HDTV competition "is Zenith's to blow technically," he asserts.

"That's pure speculation on his part, unwarranted by anything that I know," responds Wiley, although he concedes that the FCC will take into consideration which companies have committed to HDTV research in the U.S.

On the surface, this leaves the Research Consortium in the running, along with Zenith, MIT, Faroudja and PSL. In addition to Sarnoff's work in Princeton, both Philips and Thomson have extensive research facilities in the U.S. All the proposed systems, with the exception of MUSE, in fact, have been developed entirely in the U.S. ■



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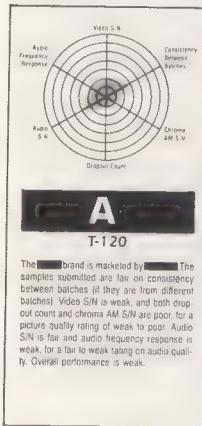
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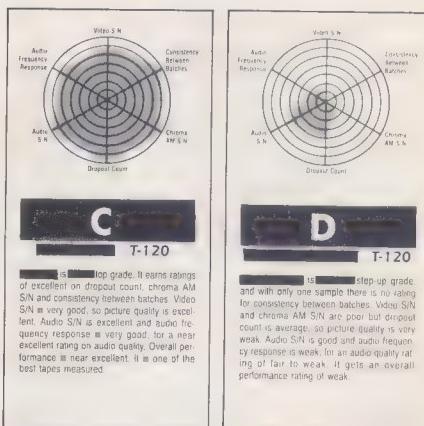
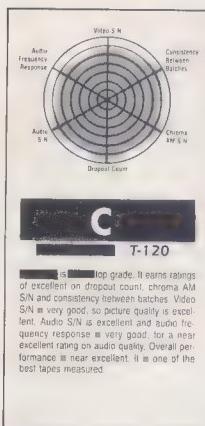
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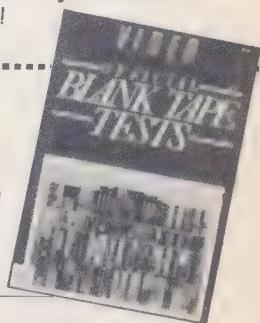
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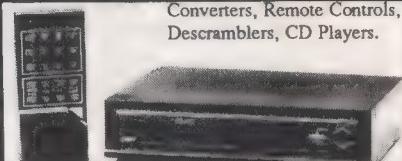
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FREE AT LAST

continued from page 56

tance a man is standing beneath one of the falls. Suddenly, the camcorder jumps into action, leaping across the intervening rocks like a cat approaching prey. Yet all I'm doing is stepping from rock to rock while thrusting the JR ahead and dropping it gently down with each footfall, keeping an eye on the monitor so the lens stays on the figure in the falls.

I returned from Belize convinced of the JR's prowess. However, I also learned it's important to treat the JR with the same care and respect you would give a camcorder. The JR is a somewhat delicate precision instrument, requiring operators to heed the company's cautions against thoughtless use.

This is especially true when taking the JR into rough country since it lacks a carrying handle or a shoulder strap to get it through terrain where carrying the JR in its ready-to-roll posture is just not practical. (A waterproof carrying case, designed to hold the JR and a mounted camcorder, may be purchased for \$65 as an optional accessory from Cinema Products. It was not available at the time of our test.)

Users should also resist the natural tendency to hold the JR by the camcorder's handgrip, or the camcorder's grip on the JR may loosen. And avoid setting the JR on its side, since frequently doing so may damage the monitor pivot, the JR's most fragile part.

These caveats aside, Brown and Cinema Products have produced a remarkable shooting aid. Garrett Brown was even right when he predicted that the excitement of using the Steadicam would keep me from noticing the effect of its weight. But not forever. The unexpected soreness of my muscles upon my return was an eloquent coda to a week of pleasurable shooting. ■

TECH TIPS

Clear the deck!

When on a location shoot that requires use of an AC adapter, be alert to the hazard your power cord presents. Many times this cord, and other cables you may use, can be butted up against a wall and out of the way. Where it is absolutely necessary to run a cord across a high traffic area, tape it down with duct tape.

Michael Connet
Greenville, S.C.

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At VIDEO Magazine, we believe our readers should get what they order from our mail-order advertisers at the prices indicated and in a timely fashion. We stand behind that belief by taking steps to determine that an advertiser is reputable and reliable before accepting an advertisement. Additionally, if we learn that an advertiser engages in a regular pattern of unfair or improper business practices, we will deny that advertiser the opportunity to advertise.

Nonetheless, the responsibility for fair dealing ultimately lies with the advertisers themselves, and unfortunately VIDEO Magazine cannot guarantee their behavior. Therefore, we feel it is important for our readers to know what their rights are and to follow the tips set forth below for purchasing merchandise by mail. Further, we are prepared to use our best efforts to assist any customer who has been improperly or unfairly dealt with by one of our advertisers.

Our requirements for advertising in VIDEO Magazine and our offer of assistance to aggrieved purchasers do not in any way limit either the obligation of an advertiser to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations or our customers' ability to enforce their rights under those laws.

MAIL-ORDER BILL OF RIGHTS

Under federal law, if you order advertised merchandise by mail, the advertiser must ship your order when promised in the advertisement—or, if no delivery date is promised, within 30 days of receiving your order. If the advertiser fails to ship your order in a timely fashion, you may cancel your order and are entitled to a prompt refund.

If the initial shipping date cannot be met, the advertiser must notify you in writing and give you the option of either cancelling your order and receiving a full refund or agreeing to a new shipping date.

If the new shipping date is less than 30 days after the original shipping date, the merchandise may be shipped to you unless you notify the advertiser in writing of your desire to cancel. If the new shipping date is more than 30 days after the original shipping date, or no new shipping date is provided, your order must be cancelled by the advertiser unless you inform the advertiser in writing that you still want the merchandise.

If the advertiser is unable to meet the new shipping date, the option process starts again—except that, regardless of the length of the second delay, the order must be cancelled unless you inform the advertiser in writing that you consent to the delay. If you accept an indefinite delay, you may change your mind at any time and so notify the advertiser in writing.

Note: The 30-day time period does not begin to run on a credit card sale until the advertiser charges your account. Also, these regulations do not apply to C.O.D. orders.

If your order is cancelled, a refund must be made within 7 days on cash purchases or within one billing cycle on credit card purchases.

You may keep any unordered merchandise sent to you; you need not pay for it or send it back. An advertiser who sends you a bill or otherwise attempts to collect any money from you for unordered merchandise is in violation of federal law.

Note: These regulations do not pertain to orders placed over the telephone and charged to a credit card.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MAIL-ORDER PURCHASERS

1. Read the ad carefully.
2. Whether you place your order by mail or by telephone, confirm the exact price (including any rebates) and any additional costs such as warranties, shipping, handling and insurance before you place your order.

3. Check with the advertiser regarding any warranties offered or available for purchase.

4. Check whether the advertiser has a return policy.

5. Keep a record of your order and all other transactions and get the names of all persons with whom you speak.

6. Never send cash. Pay by check or money order or with a credit card so you will have a record of your transaction. If you pay by credit card, you may have a greater measure of recourse in the event the advertiser does not perform. (Check the complaint procedures of your credit card companies.)

7. If you receive damaged or improper merchandise, contact the advertiser as soon as possible.

8. Get a receipt from the shipper whenever you return merchandise.

9. Since VIDEO Magazine will not continue to accept advertising from businesses that have engaged in a regular pattern of unfair or improper dealing with our readers, try to determine which have been long-standing advertisers.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

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2. Contact the advertiser in writing, stating the merchandise ordered, the price and date of order, and the nature of your complaint. Include proof of payment (copy of cancelled check, showing both sides, credit card statement, etc.). Keep a copy for your records.

3. Allow two weeks for a response from the advertiser.

4. If your complaint is still not resolved, contact us in writing (no phone calls, please), enclosing copies of all correspondence and proof of payment along with an explanation of what has transpired.

Mail to:
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New York, NY 10001

Other organizations that can assist you if you have a problem.

The Direct Mail Marketing Association
Mail Order Action Line
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New York, NY 10017

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(Ask for the name and address of the appropriate "Inspector-in-Charge.")

Your state or local consumer protection office or the office closest to the advertiser.

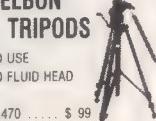
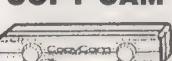
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OFF THE AIR

Sky Cable - & the death of broadcasting

BY W.W. PFISTER

Last February, the presidents of the dominant TV network and the country's eighth largest cable TV operator stood before a crowd of reporters in New York City and, with straight faces, announced a project that could put broadcast networks and cable systems out of business.

The protagonists were Robert Wright, president of NBC, and Charles Dolan, president of Cablevision Systems. They were joined by Rupert Murdoch, who publishes just about everything from *TV Guide* to *The Times* of London, and who also owns the Fox TV network and Britain's Sky Channel satellite broadcaster. They announced that they planned to put together a billion-dollar operation called Sky Cable which, starting in 1993, would beam 108 channels of video programming from a high-powered satellite to napkin-size home antennas perched on America's windowsills.

The whole thing sounded fishy. Not the idea, but the name. *Sky Cable*? A cabled satellite? Could they really mean a satellite connected to the earth by 22,500 miles of coaxial wire? No, it turned out they meant the satellite would send down 108 channels to homes with tiny foot-square antennas. These antennas and their associated electronic equipment would cost only \$200 to \$300 and connect to any standard television set.

Consumers would be able to buy the service from local cable systems, paying a monthly fee covering both equipment and the "free" programming. They would receive the programs from the air—not by cable—in addition to their cable services, although some of the programming would be the same. Why in the world, a reporter asked, would people pay a cable operator for satellite programs they could receive without

W.W. Pfister is the pen name of an individual who has been closely involved with both broadcasting and cable.

subscribing to the Sky Cable system?

With straight faces the answer was—you had to be there—that viewers feel "comfortable" dealing with local cable operators, whom they've come to trust through the years. Probably the only people who will want to buy their equipment from stores, they said, will be those beyond the reach of cable.

Why would NBC invest in a system that seems to directly compete with network broadcasting? The answer is simple, said Wright, because the question is wrong. Sky Cable won't compete with broadcasting but supplement it, because NBC has no intention of putting its net-

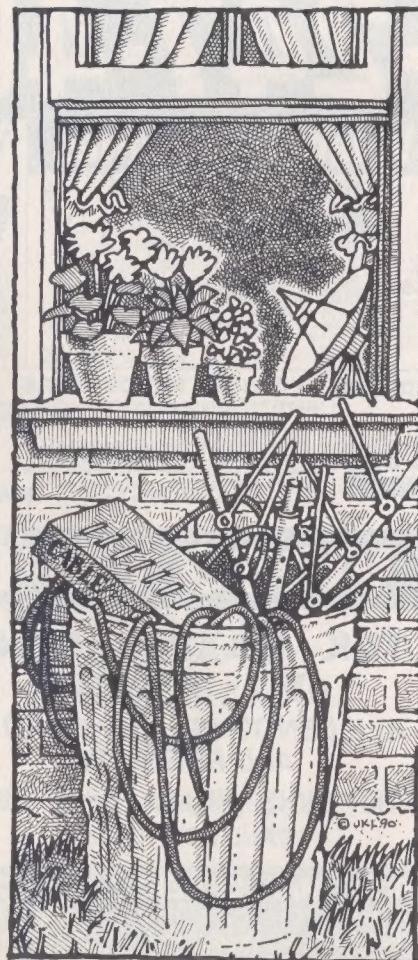
work programs on the satellite, but something else. Besides, there's no substitute for local broadcasters, said Wright, they'll go on forever because it's the only way to get local expression.

The reporters folded up their press kits, went back to their cubicles and wrote stories about this wonderful new service that would supplement both broadcasting and cable. But now the double-take is setting in. Assuming people can pick up 108 new channels on tiny antennas with perfect reception and no ghosts (HDTV was also promised), who's going to bother to string miles of ridiculously expensive, trouble-prone cable under streets and into apartments? Here, in one fell swoop, we could get rid of cable's most troublesome component—the cable itself.

How about the networks and local expression? If one satellite can do the work of thousands of earth-bound transmitters, the networks presumably can be persuaded to forget about local expression—just as cable people will, I'll betcha. And network affiliates would be left swinging gently in the breeze from their multi-million-dollar transmission towers.

It has been widely forecast that cable eventually will overtake over-the-air broadcasting. But before this has even begun to happen, cable itself is being threatened by transmission through the ether. Meanwhile, the networks are threatened by all competing delivery systems—and the most threatening is probably the high-power, multi-channel satellite. Cable won't always be the main threat because with its absurdly expensive hookups, lousy service, crummy pictures and monopoly prices cable also may be marked for extinction.

So the leaders in network broadcasting and cable TV are hopping aboard that big satellite in the sky, just in case. NBC and Cablevision are simply hedging their bets. The alternative is being left out in the cold. Behind all the fine talk their participation really is an admission that satellite transmission could mean the end of broadcasting. And the end of cable as well.



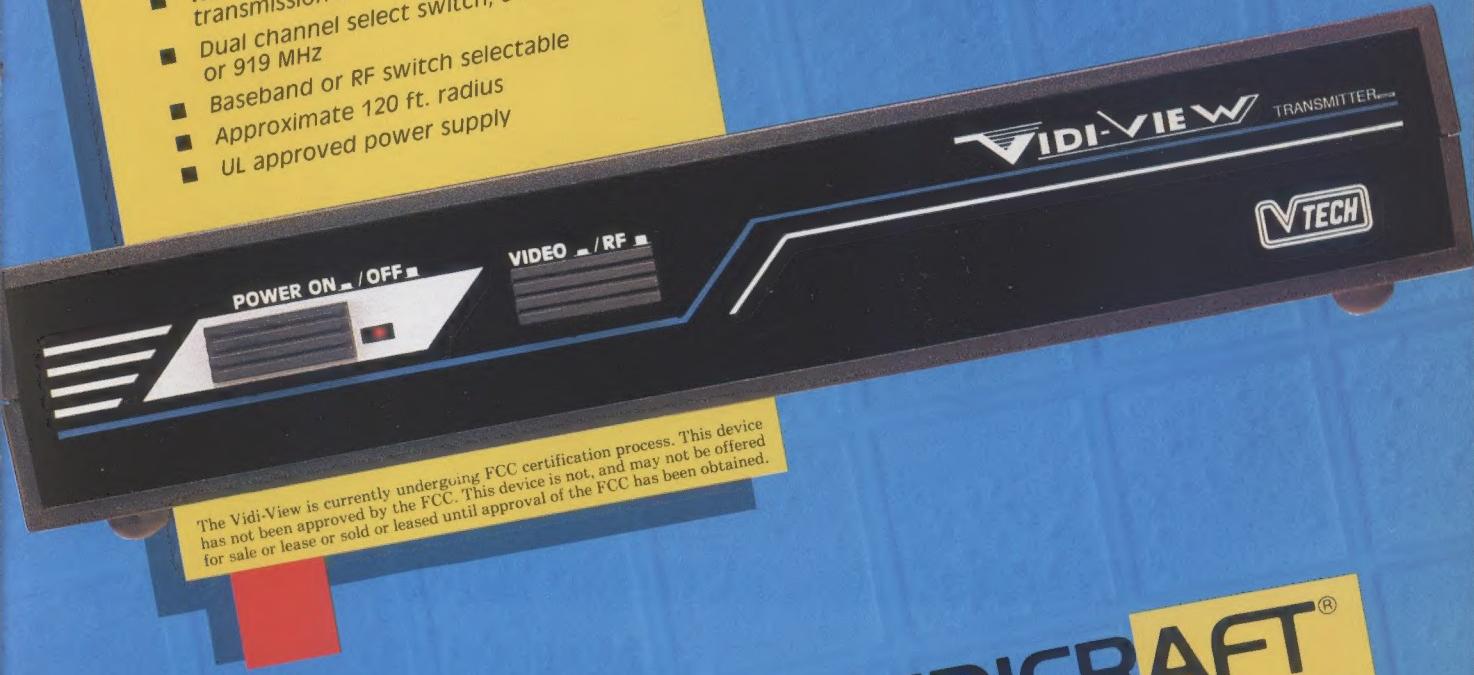
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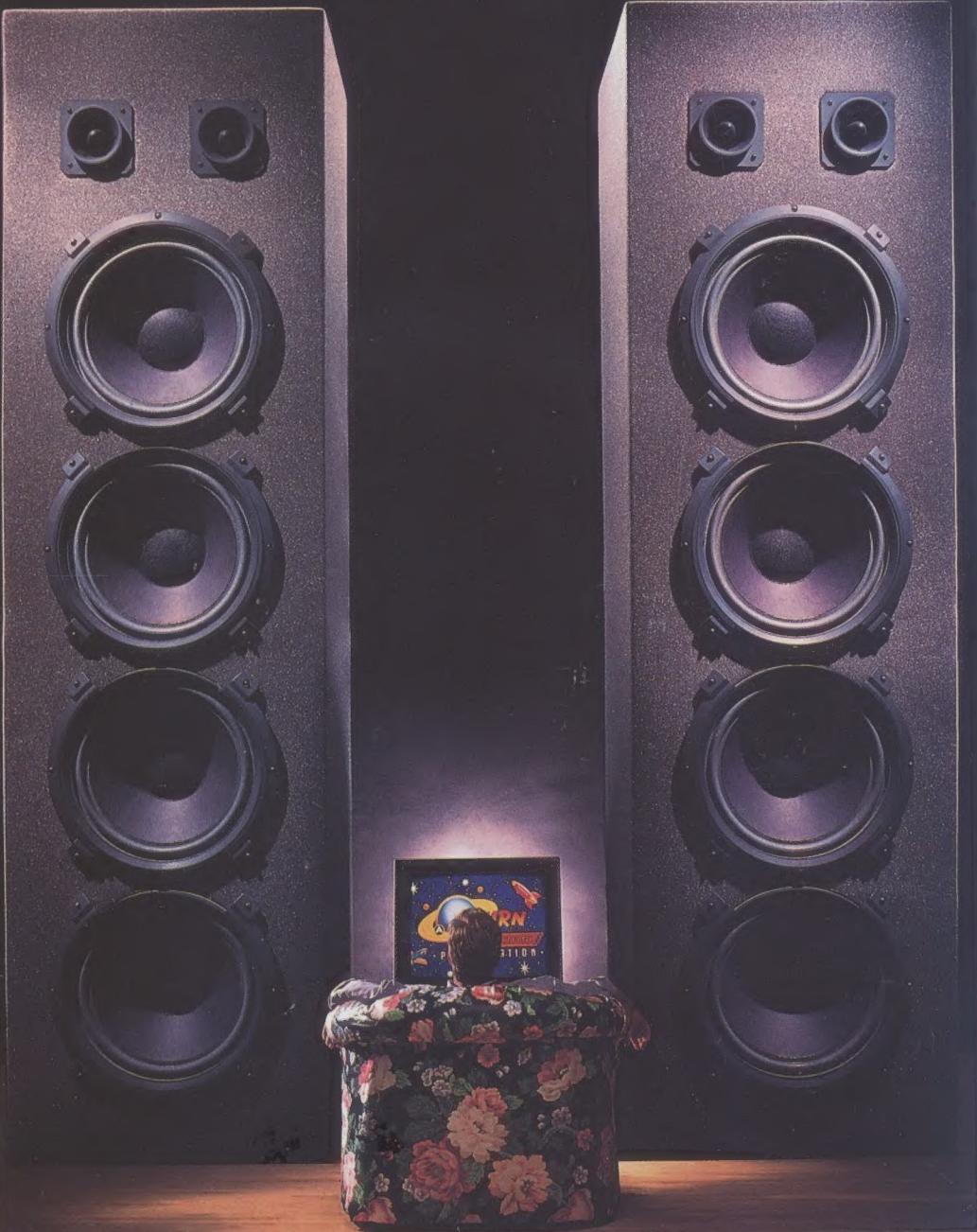
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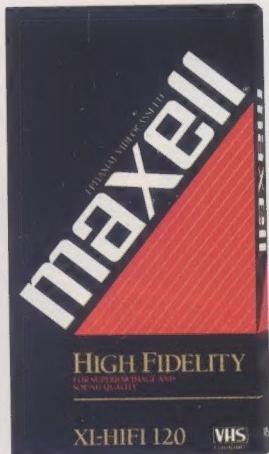
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